

# *The* **KINGBIRD**



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## EDITORIAL — ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION

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### INTRODUCTION

Traditional publishing on paper is being augmented by electronic dissemination (Peck 1996). This trend is inescapable (Kraut 1996), so it pays to go with the flow. At first, back in the 1980s, online publications were just electronic versions of their paper counterparts. But they soon took on a life of their own and, in some cases, replaced the paper. However, in most cases, the electronic versions diverged along a separate evolutionary pathway. Newspapers are good examples, especially *The Wall Street Journal*. Because of the ability to be innovative without the stifling burden of printing presses, raw materials, and delivery infrastructures, electronic publishing flourishes.

The journal *Science* has been a leader in this new medium and now has a great deal more to offer online than on paper. In fact, the paper edition often refers readers to the electronic for more information (Bloom 1997).

This trend is so powerful because virtually every paper publication in recent years has been composed from an electronic master. That is, old fashioned manual typesetting has been replaced by computerization. The electronic version now comes first; the paper is just one of its products.

Even our *Kingbird* has been produced from computers for many years. Most authors send in their manuscripts on a disk; I wish all did. Said another way, *The Kingbird* has an electronic counterpart. What should we do with it?

### FEDERATION WEB SITE

One useful thing to do would be to link the electronic *Kingbird* to our Federation home page on the world wide web, to make it available for searching. The difficulty here is that we do not yet have a home page. I wrote one back in 1994 as part of a course in HTML (hypertext markup language) and ran it on the Broome Community College web site into 1995, until my server privileges wore out. Unfortunately, I had to drop this activity to become editor of *The Kingbird*. [No, I cannot do both!] The upshot is that the Federation needs a home page and a webmaster to keep it current. If you are interested, let me know.

### ONLINE BIRDING

At our Annual Meeting in Colonie last September, Jane Graves and Gregg Recer presented a workshop on "Birding the Internet." The internet is awash with birding information (Principe 1995), much of it lacking any rigorous quality control. Nevertheless, *The Kingbird* should be integrated with it. Furthermore, *The Atlas of Breeding Birds of New York State* is due for an update soon, perhaps starting in the year 2000. The internet will play a vital communications role in this undertaking.

## **COPYRIGHT**

Putting full text of our publications online could lead to piracy and violations of our copyrights. This is a risk we have to confront. However, information is not like pizza: the more you share, the more you end up with.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHIC SPINOFF**

As an alternative to connecting several years of the full text of *The Kingbird* to our home page, we could just use a spinoff. When I implemented abstracts in 1996 such a product was intended. Online searching is not new; its widespread public accessibility is. My first online search was run in 1966 on MEDLINE from the National Library of Medicine. Three decades later I reflected on this while eyeballing back issues of *The Kingbird* for the Bull update. How great it would have been to have searched each species electronically. Great perhaps, but too late now. However, other updates loom.

The electronic bibliographic record of our articles contains these fields: Author(s) / Address(es) / Title / Reference / Abstract / Keywords / Number of references cited. I plan to add a field for the terms for our decennial index. Searching such records is usually much more efficient than searching full text, at least for articles. For those who do not understand, a database is like a city; records are like buildings in that city, and fields are like rooms in those buildings. You navigate through a database the same way you perambulate around your home town. You look for an author in the author field, not the abstract field, just as you would look for a toaster in the kitchen, not the bathroom.

## **REGIONAL REPORTS**

Regional reports must be searched full text. Here a searcher could look for all mentions of a sought for species across all 10 Regions or in selected Regions for as many years as desired. David Suggs, whose letter appears in this issue, is experimenting with the conversion of our electronic Regional Reports to a database. Other volunteers are encouraged to try their ideas.

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Applying available technology to New York State birding is not our limiting factor. Obtaining volunteers is. So, if you have the necessary skills and equipment, please consider volunteering. You will have an opportunity to be in on the ground floor of some innovative pioneering. One word of caution, however. Electronic birding could be hazardous to your field birding, unless of course, you get a (weatherproof) portable computer.

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## FALL JAEGER RECORDS FROM LAKE ONTARIO

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**ABSTRACT**—Fall migration records are given for Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*), Pomarine Jaeger (*S. pomarinus*), and Parasitic Jaeger (*S. parasiticus*) from five locations south of Lake Ontario: Derby Hill, Cayuga Lake, Hamlin Beach, and Buffalo, NY, and Hamilton, Ontario. Years covered range from 1966 - 1996. The total number of jaegers seen on Lake Ontario varies from year to year as well as with location. Observations of jaegers leaving Lake Ontario suggest that the main points of departure are at the east and west ends of the lake.

### INTRODUCTION

Regular overland migration of seabirds is an unusual occurrence, even for jaegers. Nevertheless, there is an annual overland jaeger migration in North America and Asia. Furness (1987) mentions the Asian jaeger migration to the Persian Gulf. Jaegers have been recorded on Lake Ontario since the later part of the nineteenth century (Beardslee and Mitchell 1965). Scheider and Evans (1956) noted their occurrence as occasional at the east end of the lake and Bull (1974) reported that Parasitic Jaegers have been reported regularly since 1960. When more extensive lake watch data were collected, Crumb and Smith (1980) estimated the peak dates of their fall migration.

The primary intent of this paper is to summarize the available records of fall jaeger occurrences on Lake Ontario since this represents a significant part of the North American inland jaeger migration. The data were taken over a long period by many observers from selected locations on Lake Ontario, where viewing is optimum. Site records from the north side of Lake Ontario are not included in this summary since jaeger occurrences there are much less frequent. This information has been used to study the effects of weather on jaeger migration (Sherony 1997, Sherony and Brock 1997). The migration records collectively suggest that jaegers seen over the eastern Great Lakes originate from James Bay (Sherony 1997) and the highest numbers of jaegers seen annually on the Great Lakes occur on Lake Ontario. A second purpose of this paper is to begin to understand how jaegers leave Lake Ontario as they continue south.

#### Derby Hill, Mexico, NY - (Region 5)

The total number of jaegers of each species seen in one season are summarized in Tables 1 to 3. Sight records for Region 5, shown in Table 1, come mostly from the work of F. Scheider (1994) and G. Smith (personal



communication). W. Purcell and M. Rusk continue to maintain records for Region 5 and provided summaries for 1987 to 1995. Almost all sightings (97%) are from Derby Hill but a few records are from Sandy Pond, and there are three records for Oneida Lake. There was total observer coverage by G. Smith on days when weather conditions were promising from 1972 to 1986. F. Scheider would frequent Derby Hill from the late 1950's until 1988. Jean Propst and Dorothy Crumb provided substantial coverage as well.

The highest single year (391 jaegers in 1973) and highest single day (202 jaegers on 7 Oct 1979) counts within the Great Lakes have occurred at Derby Hill. High jaeger counts (more than 30 seen in one season) occurred in 1968, 1973, 1976 to 1982, and 1996. There has been only one Long-tailed Jaeger sighting (Smith 1977). Only 3.9% of all jaegers seen were identified as Pomarines. Adult Parasitics are occasionally noted and there are six sightings of dark morph adults.

Occasionally observers note that jaegers leave Lake Ontario at Derby Hill and fly south overland. Two accounts are given by Scheider and Rusk (1967) of jaegers leaving the cove at Derby Hill and flying inland. On 4 October 1966, a total of four Parasitic Jaegers was seen to leave the lake and fly south towards Mexico, NY. Purcell (personal communication) provides an account of a jaeger circling over the Derby Hill cove, gain altitude, and leave the lake in a southerly direction. G. Smith, the resident observer, estimates that 10% to 20% of jaegers he has seen leave the lake by spiraling up to a high altitude, almost out of binocular sight, and glide to the southwest.

There are three sight records of jaegers seen from Sylvan Beach on the east side of Oneida Lake which is 33 miles southeast of Derby Hill. Finally, there is one sighting of a Parasitic Jaeger seen over the town of Mexico, NY (25 November 1985, J. Hank), which is four miles south of the Lake Ontario shore, just west of Derby Hill. It is clear that some jaegers leave the lake at Derby Hill and go south to southeast. The majority exit the cove at Derby Hill and move off to the west along the Lake Ontario shoreline.

#### **Cayuga Lake - (Region 4)**

There are six fall sight records of jaegers on Cayuga Lake (W. Evans, personal communication). Two of these are from W. Evans of a Parasitic Jaeger on 28 October 1992 and a jaeger species on 18 September 1996. In recent years, a Common Loon watch on Cayuga Lake has not turned up any more than the last two accounts. If jaegers are using this as a migratory route, they are not being visually recorded during daylight hours.

#### **Hamlin Beach (Region 2)**

Table 2 gives data available from Hamlin Beach, New York since 1976. In the decade of the 1980's, Hamlin Beach had approximately 60% observer coverage (daily coverage from sunrise to early afternoon). This increased in the 1990s, and in 1993, Braddock Bay Raptor Research organized a full coverage

watch from 15 August to 15 December. Brett Ewald has been responsible for this watch and publishes an annual report of all birds seen. Jaeger records for Region 2 come from the publications of the Rochester Birding Association (*Little Gull*) and the Genesee Ornithological Society (*Goshawk*). W. Symonds and J. Skelly have provided additional data (personal communication).

High jaeger counts were recorded from 1980 to 1985 and have been very sparse since then until 1996. There is only one record of a Long-tailed (Symonds in Griffith 1984). Of those jaegers identified, 20% were Pomarines. This is the highest percentage of Pomarines reported on Lake Ontario.

At Hamlin Beach, jaegers are seen flying east or west. Early season migrant Parasitic Jaegers are usually seen flying east and those later in the season are usually flying west (W. Symonds, personal communication). Occasionally, one to several jaegers will linger and be present on the water the following day. There are only two records of jaegers seen over land just south of the lake. One was found by the author and Tom Tetlow flying along the land a few hundred yards inland at Hamlin Beach. The other is a juvenile female Parasitic Jaeger that was collected over Lake Road in Webster, NY (Rochester Museum and Science Center, 1950). There has been an extensive lake watch from Hamlin Beach for fifteen years and the observers have never reported a jaeger leaving the lake and flying south over land from that location.

#### **Buffalo, New York - (Region 1)**

Computerized records from the Buffalo Ornithological Society were provided by W. D'Anna. Jaeger sight records for Region 1 are from the Lake Erie shore from the Pennsylvania state line to the mouth of the Niagara River, and from the Niagara River exit into Lake Ontario west to Olcott, NY. There is no single location over this region where jaegers are regularly observed and recorded. The records show that there are two sightings of Long-tailed (both from 1996), nine sightings of Pomarines, and about 100 sightings of Parasitic Jaegers over a 33 year period. The data for Parasitic Jaegers are shown in Table 4. Fifty-one percent of the Region 1 records come from Lake Erie, primarily from Buffalo. Twenty-eight percent of these sightings are from the Niagara River, primarily from its source on Lake Erie. The remaining 21% are from Lake Ontario, most from east of the river's exit but some from the Canadian shore.

Jaegers are recorded with a much lower frequency in Region 1 than the other major observation sites on Lake Ontario. In the fall, the Niagara River is heavily birded; however, jaegers are rarely recorded on the river but are found occasionally at the mouth of the river. This implies that the Niagara River region is not a major point of departure for southbound migration.

#### **Hamilton, Ontario**

The sight records for the Hamilton, Ontario area are compiled by the Hamilton Naturalist's Club and published in the *Wood Duck*. They were pulled



together for this work by R. Dobos and R. Ridout. Most records are from the Burlington-Hamilton area. There are also data for several pelagic trips into Lake Ontario from Hamilton. Coverage is not known. Records have been kept since the 1960's but only data after 1980 are shown in Table 3.

High jaeger counts have occurred from 1991 to 1996. There are 26 sight records of Long-tailed Jaeger. Pomarines accounts for 11% of all jaegers identified. Pittaway and Burke (1995) reported that juvenile Parasitic Jaegers outnumbered adults in Hamilton, and that most adults were light morph but a few dark morph individuals have been seen.

Able (1962) gives a detailed description of four jaegers leaving Lake Ontario on 2 September 1962 at Grimsby Beach, Ontario. All these birds circled, gaining altitude, until they appeared to be about 75 yards above the water, then headed south. At Hamilton, jaegers are seen flying west when they leave Lake Ontario and cross a barrier beach into Hamilton Harbor (R. Dubos, personal communication). From here, the birds continue overland and leave the lake region. It's presumed that they turn south but they are not recorded in any numbers on Lake Erie, which is south of this area.

## SUMMARY

The fall jaeger migration in 1996 was an exceptional year for a number of reasons. Record numbers of jaegers were seen at Hamilin Beach and Hamilton. A new high count of Long-tailed Jaegers was tallied at Hamilton. This was the first year ever when high counts of jaegers occurred at all more than one viewing location. Past records have shown high count years in one location but not in another (as shown in Tables 1 to 3). The data shown in Tables 1 to 3 represent total annual counts. In 1996, we believe that at least some birds were lingering and were counted on consecutive days. In addition, it is likely that some of the same jaegers seen at Hamlin Beach were also seen at Hamilton. In general, neither of these causes of multiple counts were believed to be important factors in counts from past years.

It appears that when the weather is dominated by strong northwest or west winds, high counts occur in the eastern side of the Lake Ontario and those years when northeast winds dominate, the higher jaeger counts occur on the west side of the lake. Since lake observations are limited to a maximum of about one-half mile viewing distance, it has been the belief of most observers that there are more jaegers on Lake Ontario than are being seen. Indeed, many of the birds are seen at long distance and cannot be separated by species.

There are almost no sight records of jaegers over land south of Lake Ontario except those leaving the lake at Derby Hill. This fact coupled with the fact that jaegers are not seen leaving the south shore of Lake Ontario (from Hamlin Beach area), indicates that south shore departure is not a main migration route. Observations from Derby Hill and Hamilton indicate that most jaegers must leave the lake at the east and west ends. Observations also indicate that more

leave the west end of the lake. Their route after leaving Hamilton, Ontario is not known but they are seen on Lake Erie with a much lower frequency as compared to Lake Ontario. A small fraction of the Lake Ontario migrants might follow the Niagara River. It is possible but unknown if jaegers are leaving Lake Ontario at night.

Table 1. Number of Jaegers Recorded at Derby Hill, NY (Region 5).

Year	Long - tailed	Pomarine	Parasitic	Species	Total
1996	-	9	23	5	37
1995	-	-	-	-	0
1994	-	1	7	-	8
1993	-	-	-	-	0
1992	-	-	3	-	3
1991	-	-	4	-	4
1990	-	2	9	-	11
1989	-	2	14	-	16
1988	-	2	17	-	19
1987	-	2	17	-	19
1986	-	2	10	1	13
1985	-	-	29	-	29
1984	-	1	14	-	15
1983	-	-	16	-	16
1982	-	2	38	-	40
1981	-	2	83	-	85
1980	-	2	103	-	105
1979	-	3	216	-	219
1978	-	-	17	-	17
1977	1	-	61	-	62
1976	-	1	56	-	57
1975	-	1	26	-	27
1974	-	-	1	-	1
1973	-	8	331	52	391
1972	-	-	5	5	10
1971	-	2	15	-	17
1970	-	1	4	1	6
1969	-	2	8	-	10
1968	-	3	34	15	52
1967	-	-	-	-	0
1966	-	-	11	1	11
Total	1	48	1172	79	1300

Table 2. Number of Jaegers Recorded at Hamlin Beach, NY (Region 2).

Year	Long - tailed	Pomarine	Parasitic	Species	Total
1996	-	34	119	77	230
1995	-	-	5	-	5
1994	-	-	8	1	9
1993	-	2	8	-	10
1992	-	1	6	-	7
1991	-	2	3	-	5
1990	-	-	-	1	1
1989	-	-	9	-	9
1988	-	2	4	-	6
1987	-	-	7	4	11
1986	-	-	17	1	18
1985	-	6	42	5	53
1984	1	2	45	1	49
1983	-	5	27	2	34
1982	-	22	42	7	71
1981	-	10	11	28	49
1980	-	6	24	9	39
1979	-	6	8	1	15
1978	-	-	1	-	1
1977	-	-	2	-	2
1976	-	4	10	-	14
Total	1	102	398	136	637

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I acknowledge all those who helped collect the count data since this information was not readily available. My thanks to: W. D'Anna, R. Dobos, B. Ewald, W. Purcell, R. Ridout, D. Rupert, M. Rusk, J. Skelly, G. Smith, and W. Symonds. I would also like to thank G. Chapin for his suggestions and comments. Finally, special thanks go to F. Scheider who was first to count and observe jaegers on eastern Lake Ontario.

Table 3. Number of jaegers recorded at Hamilton, Ontario.

Year	Long - tailed	Pomarine	Parasitic	Species	Total
1996	15	12	129	11	167
1995	-	3	19	11	33
1994	1	-	34	6	41
1993	7	11	73	18	109
1992	1	1	25	11	38
1991	1	24	64	14	103
1990			3		3
1989		3	13	5	21
1988		4	18		22
1987		1	18		19
1986			12		12
1985			13		13
1984		2	13		15
1983		1	20		21
1982	1		22		23
1981		1	8		9
1980			1		1
Total	26	63	485	76	650

Table 4. Number of Parasitic Jaegers recorded at Buffalo, NY (Region 1).

Year	No.	Year	No.	Year	No.	Year	No.
1996	3	1987	1	1978	2	1969	2
1995	0	1986	1	1977	21	1968	5
1994	0	1985	0	1976	1	1967	2
1993	2	1984	1	1975	6	1966	1
1992	1	1983	0	1974	9	1965	3
1991	13	1982	0	1973	1	1964	3
1990	1	1981	1	1972	3	1963	0
1989	0	1980	0	1971	1	1962	6
1988	1	1979	2	1970	2	1961	2

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## NESTING CLIFF SWALLOWS IN SULLIVAN COUNTY, NY, 1996

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**ABSTRACT** – A 1996 study of Cliff Swallows (*Hirundo pyrrhonata*) in Sullivan County, NY, at the edge of their breeding range, found 600 active nests in 27 colonies. Two New York City reservoirs, the Rondout and the Neversink, and 3 bridges over the Delaware River provided sites for 44% of the nests. Of all the nests, 83% were clustered in four regions of the county and most of the larger colonies were under bridges or on buildings where there was little human disturbance.

### INTRODUCTION

The Cliff Swallow, *Hirundo pyrrhonata*, is found across much of North America and is most abundant in the west, where it nests in huge colonies on natural cliff and canyon sites. During the past 100 to 150 years it has expanded its range into eastern North America, adapting to man-made structures such as bridges and buildings for nesting sites (Brown and Brown 1995). While the range extends into Maine, it does not include eastern Connecticut, eastern Massachusetts, and parts of southeastern New York State. Its status in southeastern NY was clarified during the *Atlas* project, when no breeding Cliff Swallows were found in Long Island, New York City, and Rockland County. Few were found in Westchester, Orange and Ulster counties, and there was only one record each in Putnam and Dutchess counties. In Sullivan and Delaware counties, however, these swallows nested in most of the *Atlas* blocks (Eaton 1988). The Pennsylvania breeding bird *Atlas* project also found a high occurrence of Cliff Swallows in the northeast region across the Delaware River from Sullivan and Delaware counties (Schwalbe 1992).

Sullivan County is thus at the edge of the breeding range of this species. During June and early July of 1996 an effort was made to reassess the status of nesting Cliff Swallows in Sullivan County and to determine their favored nesting sites as part of an attempt to determine what conditions might differ from those of nearby counties (Orange, Ulster, Dutchess) where so few can be found.

### METHODS

The author enlisted the aid of students from a Sullivan County Community College Ornithology class and volunteers from the local Audubon Society in order to locate colonies and count the active nests. Every major bridge in the county was checked and many hundreds of miles of roads through appropriate

habitat were systematically covered. Colony locations were recorded, photographed and mapped, and active nests were counted.

## RESULTS

We found 600 active nests in 27 colonies. Eighteen of the colonies were very small, containing fewer than 15 nests each (averaging 6 nests). All of these were located on buildings of various types, including hotels, barns, churches, and a school. All were found under roof overhangs. The most common base material was wood, but three were on old stucco buildings, and two were on stone buildings. Only one small colony of 5 nests was found on a private home.

Two medium sized colonies of 20 to 38 nests were located under bridges over the Delaware River, one was on a stone building at Neversink Reservoir and one was under a bridge over the Mongaup Falls Reservoir.

The six largest colonies (over 50 nests each) included almost two-thirds of the nests found in the county. (Note that these "large" colonies are small compared with those in the center of the breeding range.) Three were on bridges and three were on buildings, and all but one were in sparsely populated areas of the northern region of the county. The largest colony consisted of 76 nests under the eaves of several well-maintained wooden farm buildings on an inactive farm along the Beaverkill near Lew Beach. This farm is occasionally used as a vacation home, and the caretaker reported that the swallow colony had been there, undisturbed, for several years.

The next largest colony, 73 nests, was on the windows and cornices of a NY City Department of Environmental Protection stone building adjacent to the dam on the Rondout Reservoir. (This site is in Ulster County, but is included here because another colony of 50 nests was under a bridge at the opposite end of the same reservoir, about six miles away in Sullivan County.) A colony of 65 nests was located under the northbound lane of a Route 17 bridge at the north edge of the county and 51 nests were under a bridge over the Delaware River at Callicoon.

The most unusual of the larger colonies was under the roof of a loading dock of a hardware store at the edge of the village of Liberty, overlooking a parking lot and close to a golf course. The 60 nests at this location were only 15 feet above the ground, in a location where trucks frequently unloaded within a few feet of the nests, just across the road from a shopping center. In contrast with the other large colonies in Sullivan County, there was frequent human activity close to the nests. Also, House Sparrows, which commonly take over Cliff Swallow nests, were seen near the swallow nests. The manager of the loading dock was protective of the birds, and said that the nests were not removed at the end of the season. He reported that they have been nesting there for more than 10 years.

Two New York City reservoirs and the Delaware River proved to be the most important nesting locations for Cliff Swallows in Sullivan County. The Rondout Reservoir had 123 active nest sites in two locations and the Neversink Reservoir had another 20 active nests. Both of these locations are undisturbed, free of House Sparrows, and have been used by the birds for many years. The two reservoirs thus provided about 24% of the known nests in Sullivan County. Bridges over the Delaware River at Cochection, Callicoon and Skinners Falls provided sites for 115 nests, accounting for another 20% of the total.

## DISCUSSION

Examination of the *Atlas* map shows that Cliff Swallows are clearly concentrated in four clusters in New York State (Eaton 1988). One of those population clusters is centered in the western Catskill region, primarily in Delaware and Sullivan counties. This study showed that within Sullivan County the colonies are also clustered, and that most of the small colonies were not far from the larger ones. We hypothesize that the small groups could be "spillover" from the larger ones, consisting of birds that could not obtain nest sites or partners in the larger colonies for some reason (possibly inexperience, low social status, or lack of space). It should be noted that to our eyes at least, it appeared that there was plenty of room for more nests in each of the larger colonies. The clusters of colonies in the county were in the Rondout-Neversink Reservoir region, Callicoon-Skinners Falls region, the Liberty area, and the Lew Beach area. These four regions included 83% of all nests found in 1996.

We looked for patterns in the characteristics of the colony sites. Each of the 27 colony sites was located near a open area to allow foraging, and most were close to a body of water. A suitable substrate for nest attachment was available in each case. Except for the loading dock site, all of the colonies of over 25 nests were in locations where there were few people and little or no disturbance. Four of the largest colonies appeared to be free of House Sparrows, a well-known usurper of Cliff Swallow nests. Two large colonies had some nests taken over by House Sparrows, but their occurrence in many colonies was not documented in this study. According to Brown and Brown (1995, p 3) "only in the northeast U.S. does nest usurpation by House Sparrows appear to be limiting breeding range expansion." The population of House Sparrows in Sullivan County may not be as large as in the neighboring counties that have few Cliff Swallows. We hope to be able to clarify this in the future.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to the students and Sullivan County Audubon members who helped with the field work: Ken Armstrong, Renee Davis, Kelly Erlwein, Marge Gorton, Phyllis and John Jones, Debbie Kay, Patrick Kelly, and Ruth Shursky. Special thanks to Chris Nadaresky for counting nests on New York City reservoir properties.

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## FIRST RECORD OF MANX SHEARWATER (*Puffinus puffinus*) FOR NEW YORK CITY

**Paul R. Sweet**

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Central Park West at 79th Street, New York NY 10024-5192

On 9 December 1996, following a two day "noreaster", two seabirds were found dead, but still relatively fresh, on Rockaway Beach, Queens County, New York by Mr. Edward Gormely. They were brought to the American Museum of Natural History and identified as a Dovekie (*Alle alle*) and a Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*). The shearwater (prepared by the author as a study skin

AMNH # 831714), is notable as being the first unequivocal record of this species for New York City.

A shearwater observed from Rockaway Beach on 25 May 1957 by G. Carleton and P. Messing was initially identified as a Manx (Nichols, 1957) but the record was later retracted (Anon.1959). Subsequently Carleton became convinced that the bird was a Manx (Post 1964). Although under perfect conditions, experienced observers may separate Manx, Audubon's and Little shearwaters, equivocal records such as this are not reliable and statements of occurrence should not be based upon them. The late date of the specimen is also notable, the only later state record being from Montauk Point, Suffolk County by A. Lauro on 11 December 1994 (Schiff and Wollin 1995). While the New York City record is not particularly surprising, given the many recent sightings of Manx Shearwaters from the South Shore of Long Island, it is nevertheless an interesting addition to the city's avifauna. Surprisingly the Rockaway Beach bird is only the second state specimen. The first specimen (AMNH # 349273) found on Fire Island, Suffolk County, on 30 August 1917, was noted as the first definite record of this species for North America (Dwight 1923). The status of this species in New York State has changed dramatically since then and even since publication of *Birds of New York State* in 1974 (Bull). This is due mainly to an increase in pelagic birdwatching trips and probably also reflects increased populations in the western Atlantic during the summer months, including a single breeding record from Penikese Island, Massachusetts in 1973 (Bierregaard *et al.* 1975) and a rapidly expanding colony at Middle Lawn Island, Newfoundland, since 1976 (Storey and Lien 1985).

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## EASTERN PHOEBE EATING SUNFLOWER SEED

Dorothy W. Crumb

3983 Gates Road, Jamesville NY 13078

Five and 6 April 1997, brought 70 degree temperatures to central New York on strong south winds. Many species of birds took advantage of what looked like spring and migrated into or through the area. Among them were many Eastern Phoebes (*Sayornis phoebe*).

Then, as is typical for central New York, the wind shifted and the temperatures dropped drastically. Snow came down from the north over Lake Ontario. For several nights, the temperatures almost hit record lows.

On 9 April, I observed an Eastern Phoebe that landed in an inch of snow on my porch deck in the Town of Pompey, Onondaga County. Then it dropped to the ground feeding area and selected a black oil sunflower seed. It flew to a low, deciduous branch and proceeded to open the seed in its bill. It did not use its feet or a crevice. The husks dropped to the ground and the bird ate the seed. The phoebe then wiped its bill several times on the branch and flew off. Arthur Cleveland Bent states that the food of the phoebe consists of "89.23 per cent of animal matter to 10.77 of vegetable... The vegetable part is made up of small fruits or berries, with a few seeds, all of them probably of wild species."

I have fed birds in this same location for 30 years, but have never observed an Eastern Phoebe eating sunflower seeds.

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**FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.  
49 TH ANNUAL MEETING  
COLONIE, NY 6-8 SEPTEMBER 1996**

**Scott J. Stoner**  
32 Woodlake Road Apt 10, Albany NY 12203

At 9:03 AM., Saturday September 7, 1996, President Bob Budliger called to order the meeting of the Council of Delegates at the 49th Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, hosted by the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club in Colonie. He noted that the issue of the governance of the Federation needed resolution, and asked that the reports of committee chairs be brief.

A roll call of member clubs conducted by the Recording Secretary showed that 40 out of a possible 114 authorized delegates were available to vote. This exceeded the minimum of 12 and thus constituted a quorum. A total of 24 of 39 clubs were represented.

The minutes of the 48th Annual Meeting were published in *The Kingbird* [1996 Jun;46(2):123-135]. A motion by Rich Guthrie to accept the minutes was seconded and approved.

In lieu of appointing a Resolutions Committee, Bob Budliger volunteered to craft resolutions to be read at the evening banquet.

Bob Budliger submitted the appended President's Report along with the remark that much had been accomplished but that challenges lie ahead.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Filling in for Myrna Hemmerick who was absent due to illness, Berna Lincoln gave the Membership Report specifying that at the end of 1995 there were 558 annual members, 85 life members and 40 member clubs. At the beginning of 1996, a successful membership promotion was performed using an American Birding Association mailing list, which resulted in a 12.9 percent response, for a total of 100 new members. As of the date of the Annual Meeting, there are 658 annual members, 41 member clubs and 83 life members, for a total of 782.

Two new clubs made application to join the Federation; such decision is the purview of the Council of Delegates. Both clubs, the Audubon Society of the Capital Region and the South Shore Audubon Society, were accepted.

Manny Levine made the report of Publications Committee. He noted that *The Kingbird*, edited by Don Windsor, and *New York Birders*, edited by Phyllis Jones, are on time, and that the book, *Bull's Birds of New York State*, will meet its manuscript deadline.

Newly appointed Chair Mary Alice Koenke gave the Conservation Committee report. She noted that they truly are a committee, with two volunteers, but that they would welcome more! She reported that the Environmental Bond Act, if passed, would contain \$1.75 billion for projects including a variety of major clean water initiatives. She encouraged delegates to ask their member clubs to support it. She went on to describe Teaming With Wildlife, funded by a tax on outdoors products, in which the user both pays and benefits. She noted that the Federation is signed on as a supporter, and urged delegates to ask member clubs and chapters to support it as well. She has postcards that can be sent to manufacturers encouraging their support as well. There was a motion by Rich Guthrie to go on record to support the Environmental Bond Act, seconded by Norm Stotz, and approved.

The Field Trip Committee report was made by Valerie Freer, who listed the five that have been conducted. She thanked the leaders and noted that participation has varied from a few to more than 20. She listed upcoming trips and encouraged both leaders and suggestions for future trips.

Charlie Smith gave the report of the Research Committee, noting that there were 112 breeding bird survey routes of which 90 percent were assigned and about 85 percent covered. He reported on a study of 128 species over the period 1966 - 1994. Seventy percent of the species are either increasing or unchanged in population. New York State is tracking the decrease of populations of species in successional habitats (meadows and shrub lands).

Charlie strongly cautioned the audience about proclaiming concern over any species' population decline before it has been scientifically documented.

Addressing plans for the 1997 Annual Meeting, Bob Budliger reported that High Peaks Audubon Society is the host club; it's scheduled for 12 - 14 September at the Lake Placid Hilton. Looking further ahead, the 1998 site is Rochester, 1999 is still open and in 2000 it will be in the Geneva area, hosted by the Eaton Birding Society.

Bob Budliger reported that the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) has a full complement of members. He has appointed two people and will make another appointment at the end of 1996. Current membership (year term ends) consists of:

Bob Paxton	(1996)	Tom Burke	(1998)	Ken Able	(2000)
Robert Andrie, Chair	1997	Charlie Smith	(1999)		

NYSARC evaluated 67 reports for 1994, 15 for 1993, and is working to address its backlog, now that they have five members. Bob Budliger acknowledged that there is concern over what happens to reports to the committee; he is addressing the issue of responsiveness.

Bill Lee made the report of the Nominating Committee, which is chaired by the immediate past president and also includes the two preceding presidents. Stanley Lincoln and Chad Covey. The Committee presented the following slate

of candidates for officer positions for the 1996 - 1997 term, all of whom are incumbent in those offices:

President:	Robert E. Budliger
Vice President:	Valerie Freer
Corresponding Secretary:	William B. Reeves
Recording Secretary:	Scott Stoner
Treasurer:	Berna B. Lincoln

All the above persons were elected to their specified office for the 1996 - 1997 term.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Berna Lincoln then presented the Treasurer's Report, distributing a detailed 1995 Annual Financial Report to each club. As of 31 December 1995, total assets of the Federation were \$88,920.54 and total liabilities were \$3,565.65. Specific fund balances were:

Award Funds:	
John J. Elliott	\$1,327.83
Lilian C. Stoner	2,429.31
Member Clubs	5,000.00
General Memorial Fund	29,478.07
Atlas 2000 Fund	4,281.05
<i>Bull's Birds of NY State</i> Fund	6,778.96
Life Member Fund	18,189.50
General Operating Fund	17,870.17
TOTAL FUND BALANCES	\$85,354.89

In the General Operating Fund, receipts were \$14,329.94 and expenses were \$12,526.28, with an excess of receipts over expenses of \$1,803.66. She announced that John Bull intends to make a contribution to the *Bull's Birds of New York State* Book Fund.

Richard Sloss reported for the Auditing Committee consisting of himself, Irving Cantor and Norman Stotz that the financial statements of the Federation for the year ending 31 December, 1995 were examined on 20 August, 1996 and found to be presented fairly in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Charlie Smith addressed the issue of grants to member clubs. Three requests were received; an award of \$100 was made to Cattaraugus County Bird Club for a project to conduct avian censusing to compare population changes in blowdown areas to undisturbed control sites at Allegheny State Park.

## AWARDS

Awards are made as follows: The Lillian C. Stoner Award goes to David Paleias. Charlie Rouse reported that the Elon Howard Eaton Award is going to Kevin L. Berner of SUNY-Cobleskill for work on Eastern Bluebirds. The John J. Elliott Award is not being presented this year.

Bob Budliger announced that the Gordon M. Meade Award would be presented at the evening banquet to Paul DeBenedictis; the actual plaque will be sent later. Bob noted that we need a larger Awards Committee, which will develop criteria, procedures and time lines to encourage and increase nominations.

In the report of the Bylaws Committee, Richard Sloss noted that amendments adopted last year (re: quorum and terms for Directors) had been ratified by more than two thirds of the clubs and are part of the Bylaws.

## MORE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Phyllis Jones, in a report of the Archive and the Bibliography committees, stated that the Archive is doing well but needs material. Work on the bibliography for 1995 is underway and will be published in the December issue of *The Kingbird*.

Bob Miller gave a report from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. This report is presented as a separate article in this edition of *The Kingbird*.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to elect the past three past presidents (Stanley Lincoln, Chad Covey, and Bill Lee) to constitute the Nominating Committee.

A motion was made and seconded to reelect the current members of the Auditing Committee (Richard Sloss, Norman Stotz, and Irving Cantor); motion passed.

After a short break, the meeting continued.

## GOVERNANCE

Issues of governance of the Federation were the subject of the remainder of the meeting. Bob Budliger highlighted the issues as set forth in the attached handout to the delegates.

In the considerable discussion that ensued, the value of examining how other states' organizations are structured was stressed, and concern was expressed about how to achieve a balance between individuals and clubs. The meeting did not resolve the issue of governance, but delegates were asked to take the issues back to their clubs for further discussion and input.

There was no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:52 A.M.



## **EVENTS**

The meeting attendees enjoyed many events beyond the Council of Delegates' Meeting. On Friday afternoon, early arrivals ignored the late summer heat and went on an afternoon field trip. Later in the afternoon, registrants enjoyed Rich Guthrie's talk on conducting Christmas Bird Counts. After the Friday evening buffet dinner, Dr. Paul Kerlinger gave an enlightening talk on the impact birders can make on the economy of specific areas. On Saturday morning, delegates could attend an early field trip to local Ann Lee Pond, while non-delegates had a choice of four trips at 8:00 AM.

At lunch time, many folks were able to make the short drive over to the Albany County Airport to see Baird's Sandpiper and other shorebirds amid the noise of the very low flying planes.

## **WORKSHOPS AND PAPERS SESSIONS**

Leading off the afternoon was a major presentation by Dr. Jeffrey Wells, New York State Coordinator for National Audubon Society on the Important Bird Areas (IBA) program. Following this were concurrent presentations of papers and workshops. Workshops included "Fall Warbler Identification" by Walter Ellison and "Birding the Internet" by Gregg Recer and Jane Graves.

Chaired by Ken Able, the paper session included "Fall migration of jaegers on Lake Ontario" by Dominic Sherony, "GAP Analysis for grassland bird conservation" by Charlie Smith, "Fall migration of common passerines" by Valerie Freer, "House Finch migration" with Ken Able, "Fun facts about waterfowl in NY State" with Bryan Swift and concluded with Max Wheat's reading of "Bird migration in poetry."

## **BANQUET**

Awards were presented at the Saturday night banquet, attended by 174 persons. Overall meeting attendance was about 200. The Gordon M. Meade Award for Distinguished Service was given to Paul DeBenedictis, who was unfortunately unable to attend due to illness. A Member Club Grant was presented to the Cattaraugus Bird Club by Charles Smith, and accepted by Richard Wright. The Elon Howard Eaton Award was presented by Charlie Rouse of the Eaton Birding Society to Kevin L. Berner for his work on bluebird conservation. David Paleias, a biology student from the State University at New Paltz, was the recipient of the Lilian Stoner Award and was introduced by Seldon Spencer of the John Burroughs Natural History Society.

In the Keynote Address, Ken Able gave a comprehensive report on the state of our understanding of bird migration, much of which has been elucidated by his own research.

## DEPARTURE

On Sunday morning, folks had the opportunity to attend 'inland pelagic trips' on either the Mohawk or Hudson Rivers, which provided both good birding and an enjoyable conclusion to a fine weekend conference.

Respectively submitted,  
Scott J. Stoner, Recording Secretary

## ATTACHMENTS

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

1. First, and foremost, thanks to the many volunteers who serve you as officers committee chairs, committee members, editors, etc., the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs is alive and well. Thank you, one and all.
2. The Conservation Committee was reestablished and has begun the important work of monitoring conservation/environmental actions as they relate to birds and bird habitats. The Federation played a pivotal role in helping the National Audubon Society start its Important Bird Area (IBA) program in New York. No fewer than 15 Federation leaders and *Kingbird* editors serve on the IBA advisory and technical committees.
3. A membership drive was completed with great success.
4. NYSARC has a full committee now, and it is working on an unfortunate backlog. The committee placed the highest priority on assessing species new to the state in time for inclusion in *Bull's Birds of New York State*.
5. With DEC's commitment of \$30,000, and donations from member clubs, individuals, and a foundation, there is assured funding to complete *Bull's Birds of New York State*.
6. Smooth transitions of editors of *The Kingbird* and *New York Birders* illustrate the professionalism of both outgoing and incoming editors.
7. No progress on issues of governance can be reported. Much discussion has taken place in quarterly Executive Committee meetings, but no actions or recommendations have resulted. (report follows)
8. Finally, thank you BIRDERS. For all you do to keep birds in birding.

Bob Budliger, President

### FNYSBC GOVERNANCE ISSUES

We briefly discussed Federation governance issues at last year's Council of Delegates meeting. I asked that the concerns be taken back to your clubs and give me feedback. The response has been underwhelming.

The issues have been discussed at each of the ensuing quarterly Executive Committee meetings. Everyone recognizes the "problem", agrees "it" ought to

be fixed, but there has been no resolution. Incidentally, I'm told this is not a new discussion, it having been raised at least 10 years ago.

**The Problem:** The Executive Committee, as we know it, is inconsistent with New York law. Only an elected body can legally make decisions and be held accountable for them.

1. The Council of Delegates is the Federation's governing body; its members are appointed by member clubs.
2. The Executive Committee is made up of the Board of Directors (officers), who are elected by the delegates, and up to 10 members-at-large, appointed by the President. Only the officers vote on action items, but the whole body is counted to determine a quorum.

### **Additional Issues**

1. Individual members cannot vote, but are the basis of our economic viability.
2. At the same time, 10 or more individual members can nominate candidates for election.
3. Member club can be an "incorporated or unincorporated" club of 10 or more.
4. Amendments are effected by majority vote of delegates, but ratified by 2/3 vote of member clubs, an inconsistency.
5. Organization is not named in its bylaws. It is named in its incorporation papers.
6. There is anecdotal evidence that our name, disenfranchisement of individual members, and confusion of governance may impede member recruitment.

### **Who Cares ?**

Good question. Apparently, not many. But, that's not unexpected. Most of us would rather discuss waterfowl counts, breeding bird atlasing, and the finer points of warbler IDs than deal with bureaucratic minutiae. Evidence: lack of quorum at most Delegates meetings of the past, lack of feedback this past year, the glazed look on your face now. But.

1. Current society almost demands every member have a voice.
2. New York law requires decision makers be elected.
3. As we enter into contracts and agreements with publishers, government agencies, etc., we should operate consistent with democratic principles within the law.

### **What Needs Fixing ?**

1. A governing body that is elected.
  - retain the five officers, elected statewide
  - elect at-large board member from each *Kingbird* Region, nominated by clubs

- consider abandoning Council of Delegates in favor of a larger Board of Directors
- 2. Enfranchising individual members.
- 3. Revising Bylaws to eliminate inconsistencies and clarify confusing parts.
- 4. Optionally, re-name organization to better reflect emphasis on broader membership: e.g. Federation of New York State Birders

**Process:**

1. Review this paper with your club, and discuss the issues. Send comments to me by December 15.
2. The Executive Committee meeting in Jan-Feb will be largely devoted to this issue, and a course of action will be decided.
3. The Bylaws Committee will make necessary changes. These will be circulated to member clubs for review.
4. Council of Delegates votes on Bylaws changes.
  - special meeting for the purpose in June, OR
  - mail ballot of delegates, OR
  - Annual Meeting in September at Lake Placid.
5. Ratification by mail ballot of member clubs.

**The Alternatives:**

1. DO NOTHING.
2. Change the absolutely minimum, to comply with law.
3. Change the structure of the Federation to become more inclusive, particularly of individual members.

With all due respect and admiration for all who have preceded us.

Bob Budliger, President

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## **SELECTED BIRD SPECIES IN NEW YORK STATE 1996 SUMMARY**

**Laura A. Sommers**

Senior Wildlife Biologist, Nongame and Habitat Unit  
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
Wildlife Resources Center, Delmar NY 12054-9767

The following information was presented by Bob Miller at the Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs in Colonie, NY, on 7 September 1996.

### **Long Island Colonial Waterbird and Piping Plover Survey**

Piping Plovers, five tern species and Black Skimmers were surveyed in 1996. Piping Plover numbers continue to rise, although productivity remains low. From 1985 to 1996, Roseate Terns showed a significantly increasing trend, but Common Terns showed a significantly decreasing trend. Least Tern populations appear to be stable, although considerable management effort is expended on their behalf. Forster's Terns appear to be increasing and Gull-Billed Terns continue to nest in very small numbers (Sommers and Alfieri 1997).

### **Black Tern**

Perch River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) had the highest number of pairs since the counts began in 1989: at Lakeview WMA the number of pairs was second lowest since 1990. Birds may have shifted between the two sites. Habitat measurements showed again that Black Terns select sites with an approximate 50:50 ratio of vegetative cover to open water, but the habitat model developed in previous years produced variable results in predicting where terns would nest. The terns utilized artificial nesting platforms at Perch River, but not at Lakeview. Nest success was lower for nests on platforms than on natural substrate, unlike last year and unlike the results of other studies. Trapping attempts were unsuccessful in 1996, therefore no adults were banded. At Perch River, predation was the cause of 60% of nest failures. In an experiment using mock nests, raccoons removed the "dummy" eggs most often (Mazzocchi and Hickey 1997).

## 1996 Summary For Selected Bird Species in New York State

Species	Location	Breeding Pairs	Active Sites	Productivity
Piping plover - overall	Long Island	256	65	-
Piping plover-monitored for productivity		145	35	165 fledged; 1.14 fledged/pair
Black Skimmer		490	18	-
Common Tern		18,852	50	-
Forster's Tern		38	3	-
Gull-billed Tern		3	2	-
Least Tern		3,093	51	-
Roseate Tern		1,668	8	-
Common Tern	Upper St. Lawrence River	600	29	791 fledged; 0.33-1.91 fledged/pair
	Oneida Lake	328	7	161 fledged; 0.49 fledged/pair
	Niagara Frontier	983	8	reproductive rate (r) = 0.59
Black Tern	Perch River WMA	77	-	44.5 % nest success (Mayfield)
	Lakeview WMA	12	-	45.5 % nest success (apparent)
Bald Eagle	Statewide	29	26	37 fledged; 1.38 fledged/pair
Peregrine Falcon	Upstate NY	11	11	14 fledged; 1.27 fledged/pair
	NYC Area	15	15	34 fledged; 2.27 fledged/pair
Osprey	Adirondacks	27	27	30 fledged; 1.1 fledged/pair
	Jefferson & St. Lawrence Counties	21	21	34 chicks counted



## **Common Tern**

### St. Lawrence River:

This region had the fourth highest number of nests since 1982; 69% of the nests were on navigation cells. On navigation cells, 1.91 chicks fledged per nest, while only 0.33 chicks fledged per nest on natural islands. Of 791 chicks fledged, 95% were from navigation cell colonies; the high success of navigation cell colonies is very important to sustaining inland common tern populations in NY and VT (Harper and Harper 1996).

### Oneida Lake:

Productivity was low compared to previous years. Only 311 chicks hatched — this is the lowest number on record since monitoring began in 1979. Stormy weather for 9 days during the peak of the breeding season in 1996 prevented monitoring and caused significant chick mortality. In a habitat management experiment, herbicides were not effective in preventing regrowth of vegetation (Wang 1997).

### Niagara Frontier:

In 1996, Niagara Frontier common terns had the highest number of breeding pairs and the highest reproductive rate since surveys began in 1987. The reproductive rate was calculated as the maximum number of chicks greater than ten days of age observed on one date divided by the maximum number of nests observed on one date. A new site (Niagara Falls Water Intake) was discovered this year (NYSDEC Region 9).

## **Bald Eagle**

Record numbers of Bald Eagles were seen during the 1996 mid-winter count. A total of 174 birds was counted statewide, including 103 in southeastern New York (49 adult, 54 immature) and 24 along the St. Lawrence River (15 adult, 9 immature). Seven birds were captured, two adults and five immatures. One of these birds was fitted with a satellite transmitter.

New York's Bald Eagle population continues to increase; 1996 produced record numbers of breeding pairs and young fledged. Six new eagle territories were discovered, 2 each in southeastern New York, east-central New York and the Adirondacks. The Adirondack nests were found by ground radio-tracking of two males that had been captured and tagged previously. An eaglet born in captivity at a zoo in Salisbury, Maryland was successfully fostered into a nest in Livingston County.

Six Bald Eagles were recovered dead in New York in 1996. Cause of death was unknown for three of the birds, one adult found in Ulster County, one immature found in Dutchess County and one hatch-year bird found in Sullivan County. Of the remaining three, a nestling was found dead on the ground beneath its nest in Sullivan County, presumably blown out by a severe storm.

An adult was shot in Wayne County and an immature eagle was caught in a spring trap in Sullivan County and subsequently died from infection and malnutrition. Another adult bird which had been banded in New York was recovered dead in Vermont after being hit by a car (NYSDEC Endangered Species Unit).

### **Peregrine Falcon**

1996 was also a record year for peregrines in terms of number of breeding pairs and number of young fledged. Peregrines had new nests on buildings in Buffalo and Rochester, resulting in the first ever banding of upstate urban falcons. There were also new nests at two sites along the mid Hudson River. A pair nested in Nassau County but did not produce any young (NYSDEC Endangered Species Unit).

### **Osprey**

Numbers are from helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft surveys. One new nest was located on an island in the St. Lawrence River and three previously unused platforms were occupied by Ospreys in 1996. Plans to discourage Ospreys from nesting on navigation cell 156 on the St. Lawrence River were not carried out early enough to be effective. Three eggs had been laid before the first visit to the site. The chick count for Jefferson/St. Lawrence counties may be as high as 37; thick vegetation may have hidden chicks from view during the second flight (3 eggs were seen earlier in the season). In a cooperative effort, 15 Osprey nestlings were sent from eastern Suffolk County to the state of Ohio for hacking. Ohio has begun a 10-year project to restore Ospreys, which haven't nested there since the 1940's (NYSDEC Endangered Species Unit).

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## LETTER — A DATABASE FOR REGIONAL REPORT DATA

David F. Suggs

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I have read with great interest (Wilson, Spahn, de la Torre 1996) the suggested compiling of the individual regional species reports into a single table, while maintaining the Regional Editors essays. This is an excellent idea and with my interest in birds and databases, I would like the opportunity to explore it further.

A database could be structured containing the records of each region. The text of the species reports presented by the editors seems to be consistent enough to parse into database fields. A seasonal report could be designed that would extract and organize information from the database into a statewide report. Database reports are very flexible, the layout could group by species and then region. While generating copy for publication, the database would also build an archive for future applications.

### LITERATURE CITED

- de la Torre J. 1996 Dec. Letter - Regional reports. *The Kingbird* 46(4): 320.  
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## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON 1996-97

**Robert Spahn**

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In most areas of the state, this was one of the warmest winters on record, and one characterized by little snow cover over much of the season. December and February averaged 4-7 and 3-9°F above normal, respectively. January was the coldest of the three months, but still averaged near normal to about 2°F above. There were storms, mainly in December and January, but the impact was spotty and any snowfall not generally long on the ground. Late February brought a major thaw, with record highs set on the 21st, including the first 70+°F temperatures ever recorded for the month in Regions 1 & 2. This brought a burst of early migrants across the state, with many early waterfowl reports, Killdeer in seven Regions, Am. Woodcock arrivals in Regions 8 & 9, Tree Swallows in Regions 3 & 9, and blackbirds on the move in most Regions. This warmth concluded with a major windstorm on the 27th, peak gusts to 81 mph in Buffalo, ushering in the first month of the spring season (to provide some of the most winter-like weather of the official winter season). In most Regions, water was late to freeze and early to open again, providing some of the best waterbird reports for the season in many years. The light snow cover and good wild food crops were cited as probable causes for low counts of feeder birds in many Regions on the CBCs and through the winter.

Looking first to the broad brush picture, we find waterfowl (and other waterbirds) one of the bright spots of the season. Region 4 recorded many species as first or best in many years or even decades. Only Region 8 specifically noted relatively poor waterfowl counts. Raptors were flagged as particularly scarce in Regions 2, 4, & 6, especially the "mouse raptors" in Region 6. Gulls varied, with particularly interesting reports or counts in Regions 1, 2, 6, 8, & 9, but note few white-winged gulls from Region 5 and few Bonaparte's Gulls and accompanying rarities from Region 10. Finally, the half-hardy and irruptive groups we search for in winter received mixed reviews. Irruptives were generally very scarce across the state. Rough-legged Hawks were scarce except in Regions 3, 6, & 8; Snowy Owls dropped off significantly from fall in all but Regions 3, 6, & 10; Bohemian Waxwing amounted to only two birds in early December in Region 2, missed in Region 7 for only the third of the past 18 winters; N. Shrikes were noted in all Regions, but with counts only a faint echo of last year's massive invasion; and winter finches were virtually absent outside of the Adirondacks. Half-hardies were termed scarce in Regions 1, 2, 5, 7, & 10. Yet in the other half of the Regions they were termed good and the winter warbler list from Regions 9 & 10 was exceptional. Overall the half-hardy total included at least 41 species, eleven of these warblers and ten of them sparrows. The most outstanding of the finds were: Western

Kingbird in Region 10; House Wren in Regions 4 & 8; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Region 8; Nashville Warbler in Regions 9 & 10; Cape May Warbler in Regions 5 & 9; Black-throated Blue Warbler in Region 9; Yellow-throated Warbler in Region 8; Black-and-white Warbler in Region 9; Wilson's Warbler in Regions 9 & 10; Indigo Bunting through the season in Region 9; Chipping Sparrow in seven Regions, mostly with multiple sightings; Field Sparrow in six Regions; Fox Sparrow in Regions 3 & 8; and Baltimore Oriole in Regions 5 & 9.

Focusing more closely, let us now look at the waterbirds. Loons stayed late in many Regions, with Red-throated in seven Regions outstanding, including the first in Region 4 in twenty years. Heron and egret counts, even for Great Blue Heron, were low, especially given the season's weather. This made the Cattle Egret staying to the end of December in Region 10 all the more surprising. Among the waterfowl, as noted earlier, there were many good counts and interesting finds, including: Tundra Swan late and in higher than usual numbers in many Regions and returning early in late February; Trumpeter Swan in Regions 1 & 3, with the bird in Region 1 seen to be banded and determined to be from the Ontario reintroduction program (This species is not officially on the New York State checklist.); Snow Goose in all ten Regions, with notably high counts in many and with a flock of 39 in Region 2 on **January 15** accompanied by a Ross' Goose; a total of at least 24 Greater White-fronted Geese in Regions 1, 2, 8, 9, & 10, with groups of 7 each in Regions 9 & 10; very high counts of Canada Geese, with a peak count of 43,000 in Region 3; an incredible estimated 50,000 Mallards at one site in Region 3; a record high winter count of 17 Blue-winged Teals in Region 3; large Greater Scaup counts in Regions 1 & 2, average numbers in Region 5, but counts well down in Region 6; 10,000+ Common Eiders off Long Island in Region 10; reasonably good scoter counts, though White-winged Scoter numbers down a bit on the coast; as many as five Barrow's Goldeneyes in Region 7; mergansers good except for very low Common Merganser counts in Region 6; and Ruddy Duck noted in five Regions, a bit above average for winter.

Among the raptors, we find: Turkey Vultures in six Regions plus a possible in Region 6, paralleling a general increase northward for several decades; Ospreys in Regions 4, 5, 8, & 10, including February arrivals in the first three of these Regions; Bald Eagles noted in all Regions; Red-shouldered Hawks up slightly, recorded in Regions 1, 3, 4, & 8; a Broad-winged Hawk seen 8-15 December in Region 10; Golden Eagles in Regions 4, 7, & 9; Merlins and Peregrine Falcons continuing their increased winter presence, sighted in seven and six Regions, respectively; and the only Gyrfalcons were two found in Region 10. Flagged for particularly low numbers in multiple Regions were: N. Harrier, the accipiters - especially N. Goshawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel, this latter a disturbing, continuing trend. Owl reports were



generally the typical few for most species, with special notes, in addition to Snowy Owl covered earlier: N. Hawk Owl in Region 6 in February, a scarcity of Short-eared Owls (another mouse raptor), and a few more reports of N. Saw-whet Owl than usual for the season.

Shorebirds was another family with few species and generally low numbers. Still, there were interesting records, including: Am. Golden-Plover at two locations in Region 10 to a record late 7 December; a very-rare-for-winter Willet in Region 10; an unprecedented Semipalmated Sandpiper in January in Region 10 [There are no valid records for Semipalmated Sandpiper in New York State during the winter months, nor north of Florida for that matter. In order for this sighting to gain credence it is recommended that it be submitted to NYSARC with full documentation.]; and Long-billed Dowitcher on 6 December in Region 2 and through the season in Region 10. Among the gulls and their allies, we find: the large jaeger movement on Lake Ontario concluding with both Pomarine and Parasitic seen into early December in Region 2; a very high and late inland count of six Laughing Gulls in Region 3; Franklin's Gull in December in Region 2; a Mew Gull on 28 January in Region 2 [details to NYSARC]; Thayer's Gull reports in Regions 2 & 8; California Gull with at least **three** individuals in Region 1 and one in Region 2 [The proliferation of California Gull records is a recent phenomenon. Previous to 1996 NYSARC has only accepted two sightings and rejected several others. Again, hopefully, all California Gull records will be submitted to NYSARC.]; Lesser Black-backed Gull noted in eight Regions, most with multiple reports; good numbers of white-winged gulls found in several Regions; and a rare January Black-legged Kittiwake in Region 1. Alcids notes are all from Region 10, topped by several Razorbill reports and a Black Guillemot from 1 to 22 February.

Moving along to the passerines, a great deal of the story was covered earlier in the notes on the lack of irruptives and the good half-hardy records. Additional interesting reports included: an American Crow roost estimated at > 40,000 in Region 3; Carolina Wren still generally low, but with the Region 8 CBCs totaling 67; an incredible 48 Winter Wrens on a single CBC in Region 9; the second Mountain Bluebird (male!) in four years in Region 6 only three miles from the 1993 site, staying from 19 February onward; Am. Pipit to 21 December in Region 5; Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow in Regions 9 & 10; no Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow in Region 10, in spite of concerted efforts to locate them; Lapland Longspur and Snow Bunting well reported in nearly all Regions; and blackbird numbers generally low, but Yellow-headed Blackbird found in Regions 3 & 4 and a very large count of 262 Boat-tailed Grackles noted on 21 December in Region 10. Finally, of special note is a breeding record for January!! - European Starling with nest and three young on 5 January in Region 5, totally unprecedented! Was this the aftermath of some bizarre light-level cycling and release project?!



If you've read this far, you've already encountered notes of all the rarities woven in above. If you've turned here to find a rarity summary, you've been tricked into reading the whole report or even the Regional Reports this season. The B.O.T.S. Award for this winter season goes to the many late and rare-in-winter warblers found this season.

In closing, I would like to point out that the official New York State checklist is encoded to indicate which species should be reported to NYSARC. In addition, NYSARC periodically updates its "want" list, and publishes same as necessary in *The Kingbird*. All observers are urged to refer to the *Checklist of the Birds of New York State* to ascertain whether their particular record should be submitted to NYSARC. Please note that submission to NYSARC is not a prerequisite for inclusion in *The Kingbird*.

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**Standard abbreviations:** Regional rarities appear in *bold italics*; county names are shortened to their first four letters and appear in UPPER CASE letters; months are shortened to their first three letters. **In species accounts:** number of individuals omitted implies that one individual was reported; ! — details seen by Regional Editor; ad — adult; Alt — Alternate plumage; Am. — American; arr — arrival or first of season; BBS — Breeding Bird Survey; CBC — Christmas Bird Count; CO — confirmed nesting; Com. — Common; E. — Eastern; FL — fledgling; FY — adult feeding young; I — Island; imm — immature; *intro* — see introduction to report; juv — juvenile; L — Lake; max — maximum; mob — multiple observers; N. — Northern; NYSDEC — New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; NWR — National Wildlife Refuge; NYSARC — report to New York State Avian Records Committee; P — Park; Pd — Pond; ph — photographed; Pt — Point; Res — Reservoir; SP — State Park; spm — specimen; subad — subadult; T — Town of; Twn — township; W. — Western; WMA — Wildlife Management Area; y — young.

### REPORTING DEADLINES

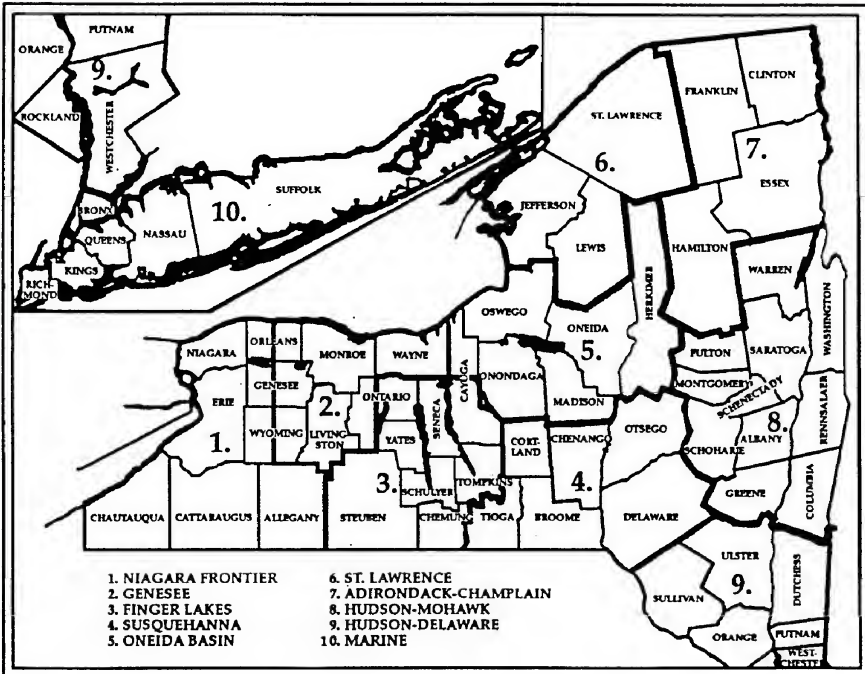
**Winter Season:** December, January, February  
Deadline is 7 March

**Spring Season:** March, April, May  
Deadline is 7 June

**Summer Season:** June, July, August  
Deadline is 7 September

**Fall Season:** September, October, November  
Deadline is 7 December

## REPORTING REGIONS



Regional boundaries coincide with county lines, *except* at:

**Region 1-Region 2** in Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming Counties: the boundary is NY Route 98 from Pt. Breeze to Batavia, NY Route 63 from Batavia to Pavilion, and NY Route 19 from Pavilion to the Allegany County line.

**Region 2-Region 3** in Ontario County: the boundary is Mud Creek to NY Route 64, NY Route 64 from Bristol Center to S. Bristol Springs, and Route 21 from S. Bristol Springs to the Yates County line.

**Region 3-Region 5** in Cayuga County: the boundary is NY Route 31.

## REGION 1 - NIAGARA FRONTIER

WILLIE D'ANNA

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The winter season was quite mild, yet not without some typically harsh weather. December averaged 4.4 degrees above normal, with heavy snow confined to the snow belts south of Buffalo. The snowfall total of 18.9" was 4-1/2" less than normal. Compare that with Silver Creek on Lake Erie, less than 30 miles south of the city, which received nearly three feet of snow on the 20th alone! The precipitation total of 3.2" was 1/4" below average but still helped to make 1996 the fifth wettest ever at Buffalo. The first week of January continued very mild, with a record 62 degrees on the 5th. Then real winter began, with cold temperatures and near daily lake effect snow the rest of the month. Half of the monthly total of 42.4" of snow, 17" above normal, fell during a major storm on the 10th and 11th. The average temperature of 24.7 degrees was one degree above normal. By contrast, Amity Lake in Allegany County was usually beyond the reach of lake effect snow and the average temperature there was nearly four degrees above normal (VP). Precipitation at Buffalo was 4.25", 1-1/2" above normal. January was also very windy, with ten days seeing the anemometer top 40 mph. February was mild and had little snow, not unusual since by then Lake Erie was mostly frozen over. The average temperature of 30.1 degrees was 5-1/2 degrees above normal and the 9.3" of snowfall was half of normal. Precipitation, on the other hand, was 0.7" above normal at 2.97". The month saw its first 70 degree day ever on the 21st and a major windstorm on the 27th which caused some property damage, especially north of Buffalo (a peak gust of 81 mph at Niagara Falls). The second greatest 24-hour drop in temperature ever at Buffalo occurred 21-22 February when the thermometer fell from 70 to 25 degrees. For the entire period, the average temperature was nearly four degrees above normal.

The generally mild conditions allowed for a few half-hardies to persist at least into January. However, given the weather and a large effort by January listers, more were expected. A general lack of activity at feeders did not help, as birds were able to find plenty of food on their own.

It was the feeder birds that were markedly down on area CBCs. Mild conditions on nearly all the counts, as well as a good supply of wild food, were the probable culprits. The nine Region 1 CBCs, compiled by Gerald Rising, show several species at seven-year lows. In this group were Greater Scaup\*, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-tailed Hawk\*, American Kestrel\*\*, Ring-necked Pheasant\*\*, Rock Dove\*\*, Eastern Screech-Owl\*, Great Horned Owl\*\*, Northern Flicker\*\*, Black-capped Chickadee\*, White-breasted Nuthatch\*, Carolina Wren\*, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged

Blackbird\*\*, Brown-headed Cowbird\*, House Finch\*\*, and Pine Siskin (none!). Since this data can be very misleading by itself, I have indicated species which I have flagged for low counts in this column since the winter of 1994-95 (analyzing B.O.S. Counts as well as CBCs). A single asterisk, \*, means it was mentioned once previously; a double asterisk, \*\*, indicates it was flagged at least twice. Whether these are just temporal fluctuations, long-term declines, or the result of uncontrolled count techniques remains to be seen. The only species with seven-year highs were Canada Goose and Tundra Swan. The highlight of the counts must be the second-winter **California Gull** discovered, not on the Niagara River, but on the Chadakoin River on the Jamestown CBC by Bob Sundell.

Although noted only in low numbers on the CBCs, Greater Scaup arrived *en masse* at the head of the Niagara River during January. They were observed gorging themselves on what are believed to be zebra mussels, the Eurasian alien that has been responsible for the enormous flocks of diving ducks which have been recorded on Lakes Erie and Ontario in recent years (as well as more deleterious effects on man's mechanisms). With the scaup were up to five Surf Scoters, a species reported with increasing frequency in winter and migration.

Owls and winter finches are two groups of birds always hoped for during the winter. Among the former, only Snowy Owl put in a good showing and even they became scarce after early January. The winter finches were virtually absent except for Purple Finch, which was especially numerous in Allegany County.

December and, usually, early January is a good time to study gulls on the Niagara River, especially the larger four-year species. **California Gull** was noted both months this season. From personal observation I believe there were at least three adults on the river this season (including November). California Gulls are actually quite variable, so distinguishing individuals is sometimes possible. With the intense interest in gulls in recent years, there has been an increase in the number of sightings of probable hybrids. Taking many different forms, these individuals can be extremely challenging to figure out. The urge to stick a name on them, like Slaty-backed Gull or Glaucous-winged Gull, for example, should be resisted until the possibility of a hybrid is considered. Possible hybrids observed this season include Great Black-backed X Herring Gull, Glaucous X Herring Gull, and another that defied all attempts at deciphering. The latter was like an adult Herring Gull in size, iris and bare parts color but with a mantle as dark as the darkest California Gulls.

Though there were no outstanding rarities this season, there were several good finds. Here are the best: Blue-winged Teal, Turkey Vulture, N. Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, **California Gull**, Black-legged Kittiwake, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Chipping Sparrow.

**Contributors:** Robert Andrie, M. Barber, Marion Bee, Gordon Bellerby, Paul Benham, William Bogacki, Robert Brock, William Broderick, Elizabeth

Brooks, Doris Burton, Bruce Chilton, Willie D'Anna, Michael Davis, Dean DiTommaso, Kurt & Jeanine Fox, Joanne Goetz, Mike Hamilton, Tom Harper, Barbara Henderson, Paul Hess, Linda Holmes, Morgan Jones, David Junkin, Michael Morgante, Terry and Judy Mosher, Pat O'Donnell, Susan & Thomas O'Donnell, Michael Pitzrick, Raymond Pitzrick, Vivian Pitzrick, Betsy Potter, Frances Rew, Gerald Rising, Chuck Rosenburg, Olga Rosche, L&E Rositzke, Bert Schweigert, Gail Seamans, William Seleen, B. Smalley, David (Buffalo RBA) and Debra Suggs, Robert Sundell, Joe Thill (Buffalo weather data), Michael Turisk, Regina VanScoy, William Watson, M&R Weber, Jim Wojewodski, Peter Yoerg

**Abbreviations:** BRBA-Buffalo Rare Bird Alert; CBCs-nine combined Christmas Bird Counts, 16 Dec-4 Jan. DH-Dunkirk Harbor; INWR-Iroquois NWR; NF-Niagara Falls; NR-Niagara River; Tift NP-Tift Nature Preserve, Buffalo

**LOONS-DUCKS:** **Red-throated Loon:** max 13 T Somerset 15 Dec; DH 2,15 Feb, almost annual there; T Somerset 9 Feb (MM!), rarely found on L. Ontario in Feb. **Com. Loon:** last two NF 4 Jan. **Pied-billed Grebe:** up to four DH thru; two North Tonawanda 15 Jan; only reports. **Horned Grebe:** 84 DH to Evangola SP 3 Jan, high count; two Golden Hill SP 2 Feb and one DH 15-25 Feb, only reports after early Jan. **Red-necked Grebe:** last NF 1 Jan; arr two DH 15 Feb. **Great Blue Heron:** max 24 Motor Is.-NR 15 Jan, comparable to recent winters; six T Randolph 16 Feb, high count for the location. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** seven returned to Buffalo back yard spruce tree 28 Feb, may have overwintered but not noted earlier. **Tundra Swan:** 92 CBCs, seven-year high; max 210 Celoron CHAU 26 Feb. **Trumpeter Swan:** T Lancaster 9.11 Feb (MM!); Sunset Bay CHAU 25 Feb (RA!); both birds banded - same bird(?). Morgante read band on Lancaster bird and followed up - it is a product of Ontario Restoration Program. **Mute Swan:** Buffalo-NR 20 Jan; two NR mouth 1 Feb; still very uncommon in Region. **Snow Goose:** blue morph Grand I - NR 20 Jan; one white + seven blue DH 31 Jan - 25 Feb (FR!,RA!), record winter count. **Canada Goose:** 9576 CBCs, seven-year high. **Wood Duck:** ten T Elba 16 Jan (GS), record winter count. **Green-winged Teal:** T Lancaster 2 Jan, only report. **N. Pintail:** max six T Elba 16 Jan. **Blue-winged Teal:** female Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant 5 Jan (WD!,DD!), second Jan record ever. **Redhead:** Belmont ALLE 2-28 Feb, rare away from NR and Great Lakes. **Ring-necked Duck:** max 26 Lewiston Res 29 Dec; up to six upper NR thru; arr three DH 25 Feb. **Greater Scaup:** seven-year low CBCs; 10000 Buffalo-NR mid-late Jan, high count. **Black Scoter:** DH 17 Feb (WD!), rare in winter. **Surf Scoter:** two Silver Creek CHAU 15 Jan; up to five Buffalo-NR 15 Jan thru; two DH 15 Feb thru; unprecedented winter showing. **Com. Goldeneye:** 1149 CBCs.



seven-year low. **Com. Merganser**: 982 CBCs, seven-year low. **Red-breasted Merganser**: 51 CBCs, seven-year low. **Ruddy Duck**: last T Somerset 7 Dec.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS**: **Turkey Vulture**: Chestnut Ridge CBC 4 Jan, first ever Jan record. **Bald Eagle**: a few NR and CHAU thru: doing well. **N. Goshawk**: imm T Hamburg 29 Dec (FR!); ad Belmont ALLE 15 Jan (M&RW), rare. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: ad T Darien 22 Dec thru (TH!), rare in winter. **Red-tailed Hawk**: 275 CBCs, seven-year low. **Rough-legged Hawk**: max nine CATT 16 Feb. **Am. Kestrel**: 46 CBCs, seven-year low. **Merlin**: NF-NR 14 Dec (WD!,DD); DH 31 Jan (FR!); annual last seven winters. **Peregrine Falcon**: imm Point Gratiot CHAU 31 Dec; Buffalo two 5 Dec, one 18 Feb, the breeding pair? **Ring-necked Pheasant**: 11 CBCs, seven-year low. **Wild Turkey**: Tift NP mid-Jan, unusual location. **Am. Coot**: max 82 DH 2 Feb. **Killdeer**: two Buffalo CBC 22 Dec, only winter report; arr CHAU, CATT, NIAG 23 Feb. **Purple Sandpiper**: up to five NF-NR entire period, only location. **Com. Snipe**: T Ellicott 11 Jan (RS,WS), rare but probably regular in CHAU during winter. **Little Gull**: max ten Lewiston-NR 3 Feb, good numbers here all winter. **CALIFORNIA GULL**: ad Lewiston-NR 7 Dec (WD!,DD), third individual on NR including Nov; second-winter Jamestown CBC 22 Dec (RS!), first record away from NR; Goat I-NR 9 Jan (DD!,BP). **Iceland Gull**: max 22 NR 26 Dec (BRBA), high count. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: at least eight NR Dec and early Jan, still increasing. **Great Black-backed Gull**: ad Amity L ALLE 29 Dec (VP!,RP), first ALLE record. **Black-legged Kittiwake**: imm NF-NR 18 Dec (DD!); lower NR 4-18 Jan (WBr,WD!); rare but regular on NR.

**DOVES-WOODPECKERS**: **Snowy Owl**: at least 13 NR and lake plains 3 Dec to 4 Jan, scarce after. **Barred Owl**: nine CBCs, a good total. **Long-eared Owl**: two T Pendleton 20 Feb; T Lockport 12-26 Jan; only reports, scarce. **Short-eared Owl**: T Porter 18 Jan; three T Yates 26 Jan; three T Shelby mid-Feb; only reports. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: 1-2 Point Gratiot CHAU thru, only report. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: Forest Lawn Cemetery Buffalo 18 Jan (DD,WD), rare in winter. **N. Flicker**: 59 CBCs, seven-year low.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS**: **Com. Raven**: six St. Bonaventure CBC 21 Dec, probably a Regional 1st CBC record; continued reports from ALLE and CATT. **Black-capped Chickadee**: 3290 CBCs, seven-year low. **White-breasted Nuthatch**: 287 CBCs, seven-year low. **Carolina Wren**: four locations; at low point of cycle. **Winter Wren**: five locations, more than usual. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: Buckhorn I SP 3,28 Feb (BC!), rare in winter. **Hermit Thrush**: no reports after Dec. **Am. Robin**: max 125 Beaver I SP 1 Feb, unusual location for winter max. **Gray Catbird**: Jamestown CBC 22 Dec; Lake Erie SP 19 Jan; Four Mile Creek SP 20 Jan; more than usual. **Brown Thrasher**:



Houghton ALLE 28 Dec; T Portland 30 Jan; rare in winter. **Cedar Waxwing**: 125 Amity L ALLE 31 Jan, high winter count. **N. Shrike**: many less than last winter, still good numbers, though.

**WARBLERS-VIREOS**: **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: max 12 T Porter 12 Dec, 24 Jan, high winter count; more reports than usual this winter.

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS**: **N. Cardinal**: 594 CBCs, seven-year low. **E. Towhee**: three Jamestown CBC 22 Dec; two Grand I ERIE 10 Jan; T Pomfret 14-31 Jan; two Scio ALLE 17 Jan; more than usual. **Chipping Sparrow**: Alfred 10 Dec (EB!); T Porter 8,29 Dec (WD!,WW!); Grand I ERIE 22 Dec; continues recent trend of winter sightings. **Field Sparrow**: three Scio CBC 21 Dec; three T Porter 8 Dec to 20 Jan; two T Pomfret 2,20 Jan; two T Newfane 11 Jan; more than usual. **Swamp Sparrow**: three Tift NP 21,29, only report after Dec. **White-crowned Sparrow**: six ALLE 21 Dec and one Jamestown CBC 22 Dec, where rare; six T Porter 29 Dec; two T Wilson 24 Jan; nearly annual L Ontario plain. **Lapland Longspur**: 30 T Wilson 11 Jan; eight T Yates 19 Jan; only reports. **Red-winged Blackbird**: two CBCs, seven-year low; arr 100 T Clarence 21 Feb. **E. Meadowlark**: T Royalton 2 Feb, only report after Dec. **Rusty Blackbird**: Jamestown CBC 22 Dec; arr six T Evans 26 Feb; only reports. **Com. Grackle**: last three T Wheatfield 7 Jan; arr four T Eden and one Tift NP 25 Feb. **Brown-headed Cowbird**: 135 CBCs, seven-year low. **Purple Finch**: 39 ALLE 21 Dec; 15 in Jan and 32 in Feb Amity L ALLE; excellent totals. **House Finch**: 2089 CBCs, seven-year low; eye disease still very prevalent in Region. **Red Crossbill**: max six Bush Hill State Forest CATT 14 Dec thru, only location. **Com. Redpoll**: 16 Jamestown CBC 22 Dec; 12 T Porter 21 Jan; only reports. **Pine Siskin**: no winter reports for first time in my memory. **Evening Grosbeak**: 20 Scio CBC 21 Dec; one Jamestown CBC 22 Dec; only reports.

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## REGION 2 - GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

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It was one of those winters. Climatic conditions varied with some very cold days followed by record highs in February. It was not much of a year for snow.

Major storms were few and the total snowfall was about normal even though there seemed to be many days without snow covered ground. Cold spells did keep substantial portions of most of our bodies of water pretty well frozen for a good part of the season. Birding was also quite varied. There were some interesting species reported, but they all seemed to be in a narrow band on the checklist. Once you got past the gulls there wasn't much to report. The half-hardies were pretty much nonexistent and major irruptions were few. All of the CBCs were rather unexciting. Counts tended to be below average with no major surprises. The annual Big January push turned up a few unusual birds, but even totals for this now annual event were pale in comparison with recent years.

The overall picture presented some highs and lows. As has been the recent trend, loons lingered through the period. Red-throated Loons were particularly noticeable in December and both species were reported throughout the season. Red-necked Grebes were reported again in January, but other than a good Horned Grebe count in February, this group was relatively scarce, as is typically the case in winter. Cormorants were typical with the occasional sighting, and Great Blue Herons were down slightly. This was a bit surprising with conditions what they were. The variety of waterfowl was good and numbers for some species were pretty decent. Tundra Swans were present through the season. Enough open water remained to keep them here. Canada Geese continue to winter in greater numbers than historical accounts. Puddle duck numbers weren't very high even though most species were reported. The now annual congregations of scaup along the lakeshore were present for much of the season. They seem to be feeding on zebra mussels. Other diving duck numbers were not very high. Waterfowl highlights included a **Ross' Goose** discovered at Braddock Bay by Bob Marcotte in January, a **Greater White-fronted Goose** in February, two Harlequin Ducks at Pultneyville in January, and three reports of King Eider.

It was not a good winter for raptors. The usual species were reported, but numbers were not very high. Turkey Vultures were reported again, but the Letchworth wintering population was not found by local observers. There were the usual scattered reports of Bald Eagle. Accipters were present in typical numbers except for N. Goshawk which seemed particularly low. Red-tailed Hawks were about average, but there were few reports of Rough-legged Hawk. The falcon picture was not good. Am. Kestrels seemed low, there was only one Merlin report, and Peregrine Falcon went unreported. There was a rumor that the downtown Rochester bird was present from time to time, but no actual report was received.

The usual numbers of Wild Turkey were noted. Virginia Rails were discovered at Mendon Ponds again, but no Soras were found this year. American Coot was evident in a number of locations.

The shorebird picture was pretty bleak, as is usually the case in winter. The only reports included Purple Sandpiper and Long-billed Dowitcher in December, Dunlin in January, and returning Killdeer in February. Killdeer and Common Snipe are often reported in December and January but were missed this year.

Gulls were one of the highlights of the season. The Detection Systems Pond and the Perinton Sanitary Landfill proved to be magnets for a number of unusual species. The two major highlights included a **Mew Gull** found at Charlotte by Bob Marcotte and a **California Gull** found in Perinton by Mike Davids and seen by many observers. **Thayer's Gull** was also well reported this winter and **Lesser Black-backed Gull** continues to be found with regularity. Both Iceland and Glaucous gulls were well reported. The December Franklin's Gull at Hamlin Beach was noteworthy. On the down side were the poor showings for Little Gull and Bonaparte's Gull.

Snowy Owls were nowhere near as evident as they were in the fall. Reports continued to dwindle as the season progressed. A single Long-eared Owl was observed by Bob Marcotte flying in off Lake Ontario. Short-eared Owls were found at the usual locations, but totals were not very high. Red-headed Woodpeckers were once again found in decent numbers at the Avon location. The only Yellow-bellied Sapsucker report was a rumor of a bird at Mendon Ponds. No report was submitted.

A December E. Phoebe was the only flycatcher report. Other interesting finds included Winter Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Bohemian Waxwing.

A number of species were noted for their scarcity. This included Horned Lark, Carolina Wren, Hermit Thrush, Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur. Sparrows in general were down, with only limited reports of the unusual ones like Chipping, Field and Savannah. Blackbirds and finches were also reported in lower numbers, the latter being particularly scarce. House Finches continued to be down from the high counts of the last decade.

A few other pluses existed. The American Robin roost at Mendon Ponds was present again as was the blackbird roost. This was the only place that blackbirds were reported with any consistency. Gray Catbird numbers on the Rochester and Little Lakes CBCs were good, as were those of Northern Mockingbirds.

The local CBCs were held as usual. Letchworth-Silver Lake turned up 72 species, Rochester 84 and Little Lakes 72. None of the counts were described as being particularly good. Five species had record high numbers on the Rochester Count. These were Mute Swan, N. Pintail, Canvasback, Redhead and Wild Turkey. Red-breasted Nuthatch was noted for its scarcity. Little Lakes had record highs for Tundra Swan, Ruddy Duck and Yellow-rumped Warbler. Species that were noted for low numbers included E. Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Am. Tree Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco.

**Contributors:** John Boettcher, Jean Browning, Carolyn Cass, Belma Cerosaletti, Gary Chapin, Anne Clarridge, Jerry Czech, Kathleen Dalton, Gertrude Davis, Frank Dobson, Robert Dobson, Robert Dows, Chita Easton, Jeannine & Kurt Fox, Mike Davids, Colleen Dox-Griffith, Kevin Griffith, Lucretia Grosshans, Bill Hallahan, Diane Henderson, L. Johnstone, Jim Kimball, Allan Klonick, Tom Lathrop, John Lehr, Gerry Leubner, Bob Marcotte, Pat Martin, Robert McKinney, Nancy Miller, Richard O'Hara, John Olson, Bill & Betty Powell, Al Price, Dominic Sherony, Robert & Susan Spahn, Cathy & Kristin Spahn, Paul Spindler, David & Grace Strong, William Symonds, Mike Tetlow, Donna & Don Traver, Sue & Glenn Webster.

**Abbreviations:** BB - Braddock Bay, CH - Charlotte (Ontario Beach), CL - Conesus Lake, G - Greece, HB - Hamlin Beach State Park, IB - Irondequoit Bay, LSLCBC - Letchworth-Silver Lake Christmas Bird Count, LLCBC - Little Lakes Christmas Bird Count, MP - Mendon Ponds Park, P - Perinton, RCBC - Rochester Christmas Bird Count, SB - Sodus Bay, WL - West Lakeshore.

**LOONS - DUCKS:** **Red-throated Loon:** max 250 HB 3 Dec. **Horned Grebe:** max 64 HB 2 Feb, good winter total. **Red-necked Grebe:** max eight HB 14 Dec. **Double-crested Cormorant:** one IB 27 Jan, uncommon in winter. **Great Blue Heron:** max 13 RCBC 22 Dec. **Mute Swan:** max 33 WL 21 Jan. **Tundra Swan:** max 91 LLCBC 28 Dec. **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** one Hamlin 15 Feb (BM), rare but regular. **Snow Goose:** max 39 WL 15 Jan, good winter season total. **ROSS' GOOSE:** one BB 15 Jan (BM), NYSARC. **Brant:** one Troutsburg 12 Jan (FD, RD), only report. **Canada Goose:** max 3140 LSLCBC 21 Dec. **N. Shoveler:** one Caledonia 20 Jan, only report. **Canvasback:** max 374 LLCBC 28 Dec. **Redhead:** max 402 LLCBC 28 Dec. **Greater Scaup:** max 20,000 G 21 Dec. **King Eider:** one G 27 Dec (DS), female; one G 11 Jan (CC), male; one G 12-13 Jan (BM), female. **Eider Species:** one IB 22 Dec (CC). **Harlequin Duck:** two Pultneyville 11-12 Jan (D&DT). **Oldsquaw:** max 103 RCBC 22 Dec, low. **Hooded Merganser:** max 350 CL 1 Dec (KF), good total for the Region. **Com. Merganser:** max 740 RCBC 22 Dec. **Red-breasted Merganser:** max 301 RCBC 22 Dec. **Ruddy Duck:** max nine Conesus & Honeoye Lakes 28 Dec, LLCBC.

**HAWKS - ALCIDS:** **Turkey Vulture:** max four Fairport 28 Dec. **N. Goshawk:** one Webster 19-20 Jan (JC), only report. **Merlin:** one Henrietta 21 Feb. **Virginia Rail:** one MP 20 Jan, only report. **Am. Coot:** max 223 LLCBC 28 Dec. **Purple Sandpiper:** one Summerville Pier 6 Dec (BM). **Dunlin:** one G 6-9 Jan (D&DT), rare in winter. **Long-billed Dowitcher:** one HB 6 Dec (WS), late. **Pomarine Jaeger:** two ad HB 7 Dec (WS), late. **Parasitic Jaeger:** one HB 2 Dec (WS); two HB 5 Dec (WS). **Franklin's Gull:** one imm HB 14 Dec (WS). **Little Gull:** arr one HB 5 Dec; total of five reports in Dec; four

reports in Jan. **MEW GULL**: one CH 28 Jan (BM, NYSARC). **CALIFORNIA GULL**: one P 2.15 Feb (MD.DS.KG, NYSARC). **Thayer's Gull**: one P 26 Jan (MT), adult; one 1st winter P 1 Feb (DS); one 1st winter P 15 Feb (KG); one ad P 18 Feb (RMc); one ad P 23 Feb (MT). **Iceland Gull**: max six P 26 Feb. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: one P 10 Jan (D&DT); one P 26 Jan (DS); max two P 1 Feb (DS). **Glaucous Gull**: max three P 29 Dec. **Black-legged Kittiwake**: two imm Van Lare 4 Dec (BM); two imm HB 8 Dec (WS); uncommon species.

**PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS**: **Snowy Owl**: six reports Dec. **Long-eared Owl**: one CH 9 Feb (BM), only report. **Short-eared Owl**: one - five Avon/Lima all Dec; max 10 Lima all Jan.

**FLYCATCHERS - STARLINGS**: **E. Phoebe**: one CL 14 Dec. **Winter Wren**: six reports various locations in Dec. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: one Durand-Eastman 7 Dec; one IB 1 Jan. **Hermit Thrush**: three reports various locations Dec and Jan. **Am. Robin**: max 2000 MP 8 Jan. **Gray Catbird**: max three RCBC 22 Dec; one Lakeville, LLCBC 28 Dec (AC); one Livonia 5 Jan; one Lakeville 8 Jan. **N. Mockingbird**: max six Mt Morris 2 Feb. **Bohemian Waxwing**: two HB 8 Dec (WS).

**WARBLERS - VIREOS**: **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: max 12 LLCBC 28 Dec.

**TANAGERS - WEAVERS**: **E. Towhee**: one Springwater 5 Jan (J&KF), only report. **Chipping Sparrow**: one Webster 5 Dec (D&DT); one Gates 28 Dec (PM); one WL 1 Jan (D&DT); one Pittsford 16 Jan (AC). **Field Sparrow**: one Conesus 2 Jan (D&DT); one Richmond 11 Jan (J&KF). **Savannah Sparrow**: one WL 21 Jan (D&DT). **White-throated Sparrow**: max 12 Retsof 21 Dec. **Rusty Blackbird**: max three Honeoye Lake 28 Dec.

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## REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES

STEVE KELLING

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It was a mild winter in the Finger Lakes Region of New York. December's warm weather, which continued through January and February, set the stage for the high number of half-hardies that remained in the Region. During December the average temperature was 6 degrees above normal while precipitation (in the form of rain) was slightly above average. The most significant weather event in December was the Nor'easter on the thirteenth and fourteenth. Average or slightly above average temperatures prevailed through the Region in January. The most significant weather event was the lack of any major snow storms (max daily snow fall through the Region was less than 9 inches), and there were above average temperatures during the first week of the new year. Temperatures in February were a whopping 7-9 degrees above average in the Region, while snowfall approached 12 inches below normal. The passage of a low pressure system emanating from the southwest brought spring-like conditions to the Region during the last week of the month.

There were two significant weather-related bird sightings in the Finger Lakes Region. The first occurred during the thirteenth and fourteenth of December when six **Laughing Gulls** were found along the Cayuga Lake Inlet in Ithaca. This was a record late date for Laughing Gull in the Region, and several of the birds lingered until the seventeenth. The second was on 22 February with the appearance of several **Tree Swallows** also along the Cayuga Lake Inlet and in Ithaca. This was a record early date for Tree Swallows in the Region. Killdeer and several species of blackbirds also arrived during the passage of this weather system. In between these two weather events, numerous half-hardy birds were reported from across the Region. Blue-winged Teal lingered in the Ithaca area until 1 Jan. A Sora was found alive at Hog Hole but later died in mid December. An Eastern Phoebe in Lansing, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Union Springs, and a Gray Catbird at Sapsucker Woods were found in mid January. Carolina Wren was reported in the Cayuga Lake Basin in good numbers. Hermit Thrush was found during the Chemung CBC and near Sapsucker Woods. Yellow-rumped Warblers overwintered in fairly substantial numbers throughout the Region. Common Yellowthroat, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, and Savannah Sparrow were all found during the Montezuma CBC. Finally, a Fox Sparrow lingered at a feeder in Geneva until late December and Eastern Meadowlark overwintered.

Impressive numbers of waterfowl overwintered in the Region. During this year's Federation waterfowl count on Cayuga Lake over 43,000 Canada Geese were recorded. In late February a single flock of Mallards in Yates Co. was



estimated at 50,000 birds. Other waterfowl highlights were an adult male **Barrow's Goldeneye** at Sheldrake in early January, and a very early **Eurasian Wigeon** at Cayuga State Park in late February.

This seemed to be a good year for finding Northern Saw-whet and Snowy owls in the Region. Up to eight Snowy Owls overwintered, primarily on the north end of Seneca and Cayuga lakes. There were numerous sightings of Northern Saw-whet Owl, primarily in the south end of the Cayuga Lake Basin.

On the downside, was the paucity of Short-eared Owl sightings. With the lack of a major winter finch irruption and with the balmy weather, there were few unusual bird sightings other than the half-hardies noted above. Those which were observed were: a rufous morph Red-tailed Hawk near Ithaca, several Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous gulls from Cayuga Lake, and Common Redpoll at Hammond Hill.

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**Abbreviations:** CLB- Cayuga Lake Basin; CLWC- Cayuga Lake Waterfowl Count, 18 Jan; CCBC- Chemung Valley Audubon Christmas Bird Count, 28 Dec; CV- Chemung Valley; DL- Dryden Lake; EL- Elmira; GE- Geneva; ICBC- Ithaca Christmas Bird Count, 1 Jan; MCBC- Montezuma Christmas Bird Count, 1 Jan; MP- Myer's Point; NCL-North end of Cayuga Lake; SCL-south end of Cayuga Lake; SSL- south Seneca Lake; TSP- Taughannock State Park, Cayuga Lake; & WG- Watkins Glen.

#### LOONS-WATERFOWL:

**Red-throated Loon:** one DL 15-16 Dec.

**Com. Loon:** 1-4 SCL entire period; one Sheldrake 6 Jan; one Lodi Point SL 15 Feb.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** one CCBC: one DL 5-7 Dec; 1-6 SCL Dec 1- 17 Feb.

**Horned Grebe:** three DL 20 Dec; one MP 9 Feb; one SCL 15 Feb.

**Red-necked Grebe:** one Taughannock SP 7 Dec; one MP 9 Feb; one SCL 15 Feb; two Keuka L 28 Feb.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** one WG 1 Dec; one SCL thru.

**Great Blue Heron:** six CCBC; two DL 20 Dec; 19 MCBC; one EL 14 Jan; last CL 2 Feb.

**Trumpeter Swan:** (probable escapes) three CLB entire period.

**Tundra Swan:** 300 Savannah Dec; two CLB entire period.

**Mute Swan:** one CLWC.

**Snow Goose:** one WG entire period; 2-4 Dryden until 17 Jan; 50 Savannah Mucklands 8 Dec; 25 CLWC.

**Canada Goose:** 255 CCBC; 1500 DL 20 Dec; 4688 ICBC; 14,900 MCBC; 43,917 CLWC.

**Wood Duck:** one MCBC (lingerer); arr two SCL 22 Feb; three Holding Point CV 28 Feb.

**Green-winged Teal:** three DL 15 Dec; two WG 14 Jan- 10 Feb; arr two Canoga Marsh 23 Feb.

**Am. Black Duck:** three CCBC; 60 DL 20 Dec; 111 ICBC; 1761 CLWC.

**Mallard:** 500 Savannah Mucklands 8 Dec; 328 CCBC; 236 MCBC; 1327 ICBC; 3288 CLWC; 50,000 (est.) Bellona YATE 24 Feb (AH).

**N. Pintail:** one DL 15 Dec; one WG 1 Jan- 9 Feb; 1-2 SCL 1 Jan thru; 16 CLWC.  
**Blue-winged Teal:** 17 ICBC.  
**N. Shoveler:** two DL 8 Dec; one MCBC.  
**Gadwall:** two DL 10 Dec; one ICBC; six CLWC; 2-3 SCL 8 Feb-thru.  
**EURASIAN WIGEON:** one (drake) Canoga Marsh 23 Feb-thru (T.Nix!), 2nd earliest report in Cayuga Basin.  
**Am. Wigeon:** two Savannah Mucklands 8 Dec; eight ICBC; five CLWC.  
**Canvasback:** 34 SCL 12 Dec; 1140 SCL 1 Jan; ; 964 CLWC; 7000 Canandaigua L 20 Feb, mixed flock with Redhead; eight SCL 26 Feb.  
**Redhead:** 25 SCL 9 Dec; 551 SCL 1 Jan; 1039 CLWC; 200 SCL 10 Feb.  
**Ring-necked Duck:** two SCL 16 Dec; one Union Springs 4 Jan; one SCL 8 Jan; three CLWC.  
**Greater Scaup:** five SCL 16 Dec; 89 MCBC; 18 ICBC; 104 CLWC; 300 SP 10 Feb.  
**Lesser Scaup:** 15 SCL 15 Dec; six ICBC; 25 SCL 8 Jan; 36 CLWC.  
**Oldsquaw:** one WG 21 Dec-1 Jan; two Sheldrake 6 Jan; scattered CL thru Feb.  
**White-winged Scoter:** two DL 15 Dec; one Canandaigua L 15 Feb; two SCL 2-20 Feb.  
**Com. Goldeneye:** 75 TSP 3 Dec; one Beebe L Cornell Campus 11 Dec; 49 MCBC; 600 Sheldrake 6 Jan; 118 CLWC.  
**BARROW'S GOLDENEYE:** one (drake) Sheldrake 5-6 Jan (T. Nix!), 4th CLB record since 1970.  
**Bufflehead:** four MCBC; three ICBC; 63 CLWC; one SCL 26 Feb.  
**Hooded Merganser:** six DL 15 Dec; 15 SCL 31 Dec; 13 CLWC; eight Big Flats 28 Feb.  
**Com. Merganser:** ten CCBC; 206 MCBC; 64 ICBC; 20 Big Flats 23 Feb.  
**Red-breasted Merganser:** three MCBC; three ICBC; 30 CLWC.  
**Ruddy Duck:** one SCL thru; one GE 12 Jan.

#### **HAWKS-ALCIDS:**

**Turkey Vulture:** two Lyons 23 Feb; one SCL 25 Feb.  
**Bald Eagle:** one SCL 31 Dec; one MCBC; one Big Flats 8 Jan; one MP 19 Jan; one imm MNWR 17 Feb; one SCL 25 Feb.  
**N. Harrier:** three CCBC; 15 MCBC; three ICBC; ten King Ferry 25 Jan; two EL 30 Jan.  
**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** one CCBC; six MCBC; 11 ICBC; scattered CLB and CV thru.  
**Cooper's Hawk:** five CCBC; 2 MCBC; 4 ICBC; scattered CLB.  
**N. Goshawk:** one Union Springs 16 Jan.  
**Red-shouldered Hawk:** one Ithaca 20 Feb.  
**Red-tailed Hawk:** 28 CCBC; 42 MCBC; 80 ICBC; 67 between Ithaca and King Ferry 11 Feb. Rufous Morph Red-Tailed Hawk: one Game Farm Rd. Ithaca 16-21 Feb, second year in a row a bird appeared. Also on 21 Dec a "dark" Red-tailed Hawk was seen near Aurelius. This might have been a rufous morph Red-tailed Hawk (DS).  
**Rough-legged Hawk:** two CCBC; seven ICBC; fairly common in CV and CLB with numerous sightings of dark morphs thru, uncommon around Watkins Glen.  
**Am. Kestrel:** four CCBC; one DL 8-20 Dec; five MCBC; singles scattered through Region, numbers seemed low.  
**Merlin:** one SCL 3 Dec; one CCBC, second count record; one King Ferry 1 Feb; one Big Flats 3 Feb; one Lansing 19 Feb; one SCL 23-25 Feb.  
**Ring-necked Pheasant:** one WG 29 Dec; one MCBC; two King Ferry 4 Jan; one King Ferry 25 Jan; two Harris Hill 19 Feb; two Holding point 27 Feb.  
**Ruffed Grouse:** one DL 20 Dec; three WG 29 Dec; six CCBC; five MCBC; 31 ICBC; four Ithaca 8 Feb; four Gleason Audubon 15 Feb.  
**Wild Turkey:** 57 CCBC; 12 ICBC; ten WG 1 Jan; 15 Caroline 15 Jan; 27 Horseheads 15 Feb, numbers appreciably down from past 2 years in CLB.  
**SORA:** one SCL 15 Dec (E. Drixoll!), found alive but later died, specimen at Cornell, third winter record in CLB.  
**Am. Coot:** 300 WG 1 Dec; 69 SCL 15 Dec; 72 GE 29 Dec; 385 ICBC; 50 SCL 8 Feb; 51 CLWC; 50 NSL 4 Feb.  
**Killdeer:** one Ithaca 21 Feb; two Canoga 23 Feb; two Big Flats 25 Feb.  
**Common Snipe:** one Holding Point CV 28 Feb.

**LAUGHING GULL:** six SCL 14 Dec (BE AF! m.ob), record late date for CLB, three to 17 Dec.  
**Bonaparte's Gull:** one SCL 11 Jan; three SCL 17 Jan; one SCL 28 Jan.  
**Ring-billed Gull:** 50 DL 8 Dec; 166 CCBC; 990 MCBC; 1075 ICBC; between 400-600 SCL mid-Jan- 25 Feb; 60 EL 1 Feb; 1600 SCL 25 Feb (migrants).  
**Herring Gull:** 400 DL 10-15 Dec; 52 CCBC; 209 MCBC; 425 ICBC; 1350 SCL 4 Jan; 2000 SCL 12 Jan; 100 EL 8 Feb; 120 SCL 26 Feb.  
**Iceland Gull:** two, 1st and 2nd winter, DL sporadic 8-15 Dec; two 1st winter NCL sporadic 4 Jan- 23 Feb; one 1st winter SCL sporadic 31 Jan- 5 Feb; probably three birds- two 1st winter and one 2nd winter spent time in the CLB during the report period.  
**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** one ad DL 8-16 Dec; one CCBC, first count record; one SCL sporadic 1 Jan thru period; one 1st winter NCL (AF!); one ad Seneca Landfill 17 Feb; at least one adult and one 1st winter spent time in the CLB during the report period.  
**Glaucous Gull:** one 1st winter MCBC; one 2nd winter 24-25 Feb SCL; one 2nd winter Seneca Landfill 28 Feb; probably two gulls in the CLB during the report period.  
**Great Black-backed Gull:** up to 19 DL 8-20 Dec; three CCBC; 55 MCBC; 40 ICBC; 130 NCL 4 Jan; 15-50 SCL 10 Jan -thru period; five EL 9 Feb.

#### DOVES-WOODPECKERS:

**Rock Dove:** 311 CCBC; 200 MCBC; 980 ICBC.  
**Mourning Dove:** 948 CCBC; 286 MCBC; 387 ICBC; one (albino) GE mid-Feb thru.  
**E. Screech-Owl:** ten CCBC; four MCBC; nine ICBC; entire period Union Springs; two Caroline 8 Feb; two Ithaca 8 Feb; one Cornell Campus thru.  
**Great Horned Owl:** two WG 29 Dec; four CCBC; three MCBC; 23 ICBC; five Caroline 8 Feb.  
**Snowy Owl:** one Canoga 2 Dec; one Romulus 14-28 Dec; 1-2 GE entire period; one Brooktondale 6 Dec and 14 Feb; one Canandaigua 15 Feb; one Waterloo 21 Feb, road kill.  
**Barred Owl:** one ICBC; two Ringwood Nature Preserve 8 Feb; one Sapsucker Woods 8 Feb and 21 Feb; one Hammond Hill 16 Feb; one Big Flats 18 Feb.  
**Long-eared Owl:** one SCL 27 Jan (SD!).  
**Short-eared Owl:** one Fayette 29 Dec; one Seneca Falls airport 24 Feb.  
**N. Saw-whet Owl:** one Hammond Hill 1 Jan; one Brooktondale 19 Feb thru; one Arnot Forest 19 Feb; one Caroline 25 Feb.  
**Belted Kingfisher:** one DL 15 Dec; 11 CCBC; five ICBC; one SCL thru; one Kashong Pt 7 Jan; one Newtown Creek 26 Feb.  
**Red-headed Woodpecker:** one ICBC; one imm Cayuga 19 Jan thru (TN!).  
**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** eight CCBC; 29 MCBC; 35 ICBC; scattered through period.  
**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** one Ludlowville through period.  
**Downy Woodpecker:** 61 CCBC; 82 MCBC; 258 ICBC.  
**Hairy Woodpecker:** 12 CCBC; 20 MCBC; 78 ICBC.  
**N. Flicker:** seven CCBC; 20 MCBC; 27 ICBC; scattered reports CLB to 8 Feb.  
**Pileated Woodpecker:** seven CCBC; six MCBC; 20 ICBC.

#### FLYCATCHERS-STARLING:

**E. Phoebe:** one E. Lansing 12 Jan (DR!).  
**Horned Lark:** two CCBC; 27 MCBC; 54 ICBC; 100 Dryden 4 Feb; 12 EL 18 Feb.  
**TREE SWALLOW:** two SCL 22 Feb (DM! m.ob); four Ithaca 23 Feb (MH!), record early CLB.  
**Blue Jay:** 141 CCBC; 151 MCBC; 455 ICBC.  
**Am. Crow:** 577 CCBC; 1088 MCBC; 1756 ICBC; >40,000 Auburn thru.  
**Fish Crow:** one CCBC (first count record); seven SCL period.  
**Com. Raven:** one WG 4 Dec; six CCBC; one ICBC; two Dryden 30 Jan; two EL 1 Feb; one WG 4 Feb; two Hammond Hill 16 Feb.  
**Black-capped Chickadee:** 537 CCBC; 211 MCBC; 1793 ICBC.  
**Tufted Titmouse:** 55 CCBC; 17 MCBC; 146 ICBC.  
**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** nine CCBC; 28 ICBC; one Hammond Hill 16 Feb, numbers seem down.  
**White-breasted Nuthatch:** 63 CCBC; 52 MCBC; 178 ICBC.  
**Brown Creeper:** six CCBC; 22 MCBC; 23 ICBC.

**Carolina Wren:** three CCBC; five ICBC; one WG 3 Jan; one Canoga 18 Jan, wintered CLB in better than usual numbers; one Naples period.  
**Winter Wren:** two Queen Catherine Marsh 29 Dec; two CCBC; one ICBC; one Buttermilk Falls 8 Feb; one SCL 8 Feb.  
**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** eight CCBC; one MCBC; 27 ICBC.  
**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** one SCL 3 Dec; one Union Springs 10 Jan (KD!).  
**E. Bluebird:** 18 CCBC; 18 MCBC; 46 ICBC; 39 GE 12 Dec; six SCL 8 Feb; one Southport 9 Feb.  
**Hermit Thrush:** one CCBC, 4th sighting in Chemung Valley; one MCBC; one near Sapsucker Woods, almost yearly winter reports in CLB.  
**Am. Robin:** 15 CCBC; 215 MCBC; six ICBC; 35 Auburn 2 Feb; 29 Varna 11 Feb; one Chemung 11 Feb.  
**Gray Catbird:** one SW 20 Jan, 17th CLB winter record.  
**N. Mockingbird:** seven CCBC; one MCBC; nine ICBC, several overwintered CLB and CV.  
**Cedar Waxwing:** 26 CCBC; 96 MCBC; 218 ICBC; few reports thereafter.  
**N. Shrike:** one imm DL 8-15 Dec; one MCBC; one ICBC; one West Danby 21 Feb, only reports.  
**European Starling:** 2197 CCBC, count record high; 915 MCBC; 3323 ICBC.

#### **WARBLERS-VIREOS:**

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** one EL 7 Dec; seven ICBC; one SCL 8 Feb.  
**Com. Yellowthroat:** one MCBC, 7th CLB winter record.

#### **TANAGERS-WEAVERS:**

**N. Cardinal:** 69 CCBC; 63 MCBC; 235 ICBC.  
**E. Towhee:** one ICBC.  
**Am. Tree Sparrow:** 121 CCBC; 224 MCBC; 593 ICBC; 20 Dryden 17 Jan, high numbers thru.  
**Field Sparrow:** one ICBC.  
**Vesper Sparrow:** one MCBC, 6th CLB winter record.  
**Savannah Sparrow:** one MCBC, 9th CLB winter record.  
**Fox Sparrow:** one GE 29 Dec.  
**Song Sparrow:** eight CCBC; 19 MCBC; 54 ICBC; scattered thru.  
**Swamp Sparrow:** four CCBC, count record high; four ICBC; one Dryden 18 Jan; one SCL 12 Feb.  
**White-throated Sparrow:** ten CCBC; 67 MCBC; 147 ICBC; scattered thru.  
**White-crowned Sparrow:** one MCBC.  
**Dark-eyed Junco:** 160 CCBC; 128 MCBC; 844 ICBC.  
**Lapland Longspur:** one MCBC; two+ Dryden 19 Jan-16 Feb; two Savannah 24 Feb.  
**Snow Bunting:** three SCL 3 Dec; 20 MCBC; 346 ICBC; 750 + Dryden 18 Jan- 16 Feb; 100 EL 15 Feb.  
**Red-winged Blackbird:** one MCBC; two ICBC; migrants arrived CV 21 Feb; max 235 Enfield 26 Feb.  
**E. Meadowlark:** one Canandaigua 15 Jan; one EL 2 Feb; one SCL 9 Feb; one SCL 21 Feb.  
**YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD:** one Canoga 5 Dec (AP!).  
**Rusty Blackbird:** two ICBC.  
**Com. Grackle:** two ICBC; migrants EL 23 Feb; max 75 Enfield 26 Feb.  
**Brown-headed Cowbird:** one MCBC; seven ICBC; six Auburn 2 Feb; one Enfield 26 Feb.  
**Purple Finch:** four ICBC; 50 Ellis Hollow 2 Feb; 80 Caroline 5 Feb, numerous reports at feeders.  
**House Finch:** 595 CCBC; 96 MCBC; 567 ICBC.  
**Com. Redpoll:** 15 Hammond Hill 12 Feb (JB!).  
**Pine Siskin:** 23 ICBC; one Enfield 13 Jan; two Lyons mid-Jan.  
**Am. Goldfinch:** 51 CCBC; 86 MCBC; 244 ICBC.  
**House Sparrow:** 403 CCBC; 251 MCBC; 804 ICBC.

**ADDENDUM: Glossy Ibis:** one MNWR 13 Oct (M. Medler).

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## REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

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It was a mild, wet winter with about average snowfall, minimum snow cover most of the season and no really major storms. At Cooperstown, where weather files date back to 1854, it was the seventh warmest winter of record, according to Harold Hollis, National Weather Service observer. He also noted it was among the ten wettest winters of record. December's average daily temperature of 33°F was more than seven degrees above normal and, for the first eighteen days of the month, mean temperatures never dropped below freezing. Precipitation for December measured 6.16 inches, three inches over average, and included nearly two inches of rain the first two days of the month. December rounded out a very wet 1996, shattering annual precipitation records across the Region. January's daily mean temperature of 21.4°F was just a degree warmer than normal. Precipitation totaled 3.37 inches, about an inch over average, but included 35.1 inches of snow, making it the peak snow month of the season. February was three degrees warmer than normal with two record high daily temperature readings. Thermometers rose to 62°F at Cooperstown 22 Feb, the highest February reading there in over a century. The 60°F reached 26 Feb was a record for the date. Precipitation for the month was an inch above average.

A nice open winter with plenty of bare fields, much open water, and abundant wild foods! The scene appeared ideal for steady flocks of different birds. But, as usual, the birds had their own reactions. Waterfowl were very enthusiastic about good areas of open water. Red-throated Loon and White-winged Scoter were reported for the first winter in at least 20 years. A probable record seventeen species of ducks were seen and, equally noteworthy, many remained through much of the season. Hawks were scarce despite open fields that should have indicated good hunting opportunities. Owls also were scarce. Could it have been a bad year for voles and mice? Big declines were noted on CBCs for Wild Turkey which were reported to have had weather related nesting failures last spring. The birds also had abundant wild foods in the woods so were not forced into the open.

Tallies were down on all four of the CBCs conducted this year both for number of species seen and total birds counted. Despite the negatives of the season, an interesting twist was the number of birds, not usually considered our half-hardies who chose to tough it out in Region 4. Rarest was an adult male Yellow-headed Blackbird at a feeder in South Kortright DELA most of January and February. Previous Regional reports of the handsome western bird have been in the spring. He is believed to have arrived with a flock of cowbirds and "was always with them," according to observers. Other unusual winter visitors



include a pair of Green-winged Teal in January and February at Rogers Environmental Education Center feeders, where "they fed on seed that dropped to the ground." If seen at all in the winter, the species usually exits the Region by mid January. A Common Yellowthroat wasn't so lucky. It had crashed into a window at the Center and was found dead 11 Jan. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was at an Oneonta feeder January and early February, and Eastern Towhee spent most of January at an Endicott feeder.

Rare and possibly Regional firsts were two **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at the Lounsberry Rest Stop west of Owego 17 January. Eastern Bluebird, White-throated Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco overwintered in near record numbers, as did Purple Finch after early January. Many of the usual half-hardies such as American Robin, Northern Mockingbird and Northern Cardinal were scarce, as were such traditional winter residents as Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Northern Shrike, Pine Siskin, and Evening Grosbeak. Missed entirely were Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, and Common Redpoll.

**Observers:** Elliott Adams, Cutler & Jeannette Baldwin, Les Bemont, Bruce Bozdos, Broome Naturalists Club, Laura Carter, Mary Ann Cuff, John Davis, Mary Dobinsky, Sadie Dorber, Dolores Elliott, Sue Gaynor, Bob Grosek, Elva Hawken, Jim, Jared, Marion and Bill Karl, Sara Kinch, Gail Kirch, Eric Knight, Andy Mason, George & Evelyn Mead, Bob Miller, Robert Pantle, Todd Parsons, Marie Petuh, Phyllis & Bob Phillips, Halladay Pierce, Tom Salo, Joe Sedlacek, Julie Smith, Eric Sullivan, Tom & Norene Tasber, Jan Trzeciak, Bill Toner, Chris Vredenburg, Fred von Mechow, Nancy Weissflog, Don Windsor, Irene Wright.

**Abbreviations:** BCBC - BROO Christmas Bird Count, 29 Dec; CRes - Cannonsville Reservoir; CCBC- CHEN Christmas Bird Count, 21 Dec; DOCBC - Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count, 21 Dec; FHNC - Finch Hollow Nature Center; FMHW - Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch; FWC - Federation Waterfowl Count; JCTy - Johnson City; OtsL - Otsego Lake; REEC - Rogers Environmental Education Center; TCBC - TIOG Christmas Bird Count, 29 Dec; WPR - Whitney Point Reservoir.

**LOONS-DUCKS:** **Red-throated Loon:** WPR 16 Dec (ES), first in at least 20 years. **Pied-billed Grebe:** OtsL 28 Dec; Endicott 12 Jan, often missed. **Red-necked Grebe:** two on FWC, only fifth winter since 1981. **Great Blue Heron:** max 15 on four CBC's; five reports Jan; arr seven previously established rookery Owego 21 Feb, early. **Mute Swan:** CRes Jan, Feb: "pair commute between Greene area of Chenango R and Boland Pd when water is open."(BB). **Snow Goose:** BROO corn field with Canada Geese 27 Feb, only report. **Canada Goose:** max 5230 on FWC; 2230 on CBC's, high counts. **Wood Duck:** two BCBC; one other, average count. **Green-winged Teal:** two REEC



Jan, Feb, sixth report since 1984, first for Feb. **Am. Black Duck**: 17 on CBC's; 77 on FWC, very low counts. **Mallard**: max 862 FWC. **N. Pintail**: BCBC; three reports CRes Jan, Feb max five; three BROO reports Feb max two, very high count. **Redhead**: OtsL & Cooperstown Dam thru, max 50, very high count. **Ring-necked Duck**: max four FWC; two CHEN 23 Feb. **Canvasback**: three WPR 26 Dec. **Greater Scaup**: two FWC. **Lesser Scaup**: OTSE 12 Jan, 7 & 25 Feb; BROO 16 Feb. **White-winged Scoter**: six WPR 16 Dec (ES), first winter in at least 20 years. **Com. Goldeneye**: max 21 Susquehanna R TIOG 20 Jan; eight BCBC, average. **Bufflehead**: singles two sites average. **Hooded Merganser**: max 48 FWC, high count; three reports BROO late Feb max two, better than average. **Com. Merganser**: max 266 FWC; 60 WPR 16 Dec, good numbers. **Red-breasted Merganser**: max six Cooperstown Dam 11 Jan; four there Feb, good count.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS**: **Osprey**: arr OTSE 26 Feb, very early and only report. **Bald Eagle**: max 11 DELA 19 Jan (TIOG club trip); two CRes 1 Dec, FMHW 25 Dec, good count. **N. Harrier**: BROO 7 Dec & 10 Jan; CHEN late Dec, scarce second successive winter. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: seven on CBC's; three reports/month, average. **Cooper's Hawk**: eight reports Jan; singles Dec, Jan, mostly at feeders. **N. Goshawk**: no report, first winter since 1989. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: BCBC third successive year, previously rare. **Red-tailed Hawk**: 48 on CBC's, lowest CBC total since 1990. **Rough-legged Hawk**: nine on CBC's mostly CHEN: 15 reports Feb; five in Mar, decline from high counts of previous three years. **Golden Eagle**: five FMHW 25 Dec, late migrants. **Am. Kestrel**: two on CBC's, scarce. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: two on CBC's; three singles Feb, average. **Ruffed Grouse**: max seven Vestal Center 10 Feb, "male displaying for two females whenever we walked in our OTSE woods" (P&BP). **Wild Turkey**: 119 on CBC's; 130 DELA 7 Feb, scarce. **Am. Coot**: OtsL all period, max 90 on 28 Dec; 26 BROO 11 Feb; Norwich after 29 Jan, rare in winter before 1995. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: two Susquehanna R west of Owego 17 Jan (BB,GK), first known Regional report. **Great Black-backed Gull**: max 60 Tioughnioga R 31 Jan; 20 there week of 9 Feb (BT), high count.

**PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS**: **Mourning Dove**: 1227 on CBC's, average. **E. Screech-Owl**: W. Burlington 3 Jan, only one. **Great Horned Owl**: six on CBC's, scarce. **Barred Owl**: TIOG Feb, only report. **N. Saw-whet Owl**: Candor heard several days late Feb (RP), often missed. **Belted Kingfisher**: only five on CBC's; but "better numbers" this winter reported by REEC staff. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: eleven on CBC's; two sites OTSE, one BROO and several TIOG Feb, steady winter population. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: Oneonta feeder 13 Jan - 16 Feb (same bird there November). **Downy**

**Woodpecker:** 149 on CBC's, low count. **Hairy Woodpecker:** 42 on CBC's. **N. Flicker:** singles on three CBC's; arr BROO 19 Feb. **Pileated Woodpecker:** six on CBC's, low count; good increase Feb.

**FLYCATCHERS - STARLING:** **Horned Lark:** eight on CCBC; one CORT 21 Feb; ten BROO 7 Feb, scarce. **Blue Jay:** 1044 on CBC's, best for CBC's of the 90's. **Fish Crow:** singles BROO and TIOG CBC's, second year since 1987. **Com. Raven:** n Cooperstown area 27 Dec & 3 Jan (JD). **Black-capped Chickadee:** 1772 on CBC's, decline. **Tufted Titmouse:** 127 on CBC's, low count. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** scarce at feeders; a poor 27 on CBC's. **Brown Creeper:** "not even one report TIOG"; 21 on CBC's, scarce. **Carolina Wren:** three on BCBC, only report. **HOUSE WREN:** TIOG feeder Jan (G&EM), first winter since Jan 1983. **Winter Wren:** CHEN late Dec (REEC staff), only fifth winter since 1982. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** 23 on CBC's, scarce all period. **E. Bluebird:** 26 BCBC; nine TCBC; eight DELA 25 Jan; occasional Endicott yard max five; seven reports Feb, max four, very high numbers. **Am. Robin:** only eight on CBC's; feeding in Mt. Ash tree Oneonta through period; max 15 n OTSE 16 Feb, average. **N. Mockingbird:** Binghamton yard 13 Jan, 12 Feb; JCty 2, 4 Jan; Walton 10 Feb, scarce. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 119 on CBC's; 114 FHNC 29 Jan, good counts after late Dec. **N. Shrike:** CHEN occasionally through Jan; BROO 15 Jan; DELA 21 Feb; OTSE yard 26-28 Feb, scarce.

**VIREOS-WARBLES:** **Com. Yellowthroat:** one REEC 11 Jan (FvM).

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS:** **N. Cardinal:** 115 on CBC's, lowest count in 16 years; scarce at feeders all period. **E. Towhee:** Endicott feeder 14-31 Jan (JS), often missed. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** 391 on CBC's; "several small flocks mixed with juncos flushed along the roads on my CBC route. It was like the 'old days' seeing so many in the wild." (EH). **Chipping Sparrow:** four TCBC, often missed. **Field Sparrow:** CCBC; Greene feeder after 9 Feb; REEC 11 Feb, early arrivals. **Song Sparrow:** 36 on CBC's. **White-throated Sparrow:** 49 on CBC's, high count; mid winter max 16 JCy 9 Feb. **Dark-eyed Junco:** 867 on CBC's, highest count in at least 15 years; mid winter max 40 CHEN 3 Feb. **Snow Bunting:** 47 CCBC, only Dec report; max 100 BROO 10 Jan; none Feb, scarce. **Red-winged Blackbird:** TCBC; arr OTSE, TIOG 21 Feb; max 600 BROO 25 Feb, early arrival. **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD:** South Kortright from early Jan (mob), usually with flock of cowbirds, first Regional winter report, unusually long stopover. **Com. Grackle:** three singles Dec; arr 22 Feb. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** max 50 S. Kortright 21 Feb. **Purple Finch:** 40 on CBC's; increasing influx at feeders Jan & Feb; max 43 OTSE 17 Feb. **House Finch:** 777 on CBC's, big decline from counts of previous three years. **Pine Siskin:** max 16 Norwich 4 Dec "for about three minutes" (DW); four

DOCBC; none Jan, two singles CHEN Feb, scarce. **Am. Goldfinch**: 577 on CBC's, high count; mid winter max 60 Oneonta Jan, Feb, average. **Evening Grosbeak**: scarce.

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## **REGION 5 - ONEIDA LAKE BASIN**

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Winter 1996-1997 in Region 5 was notable for its mild temperatures, lack of significant snowfall, and depressing lack of sunshine. December's average temperature was 34.8°F making it the third warmest December on record. The high was 61°F on 1 December and the low was -1°F on the 31st. The month's precipitation made it the third wettest December, with 4.45" recorded, but only 21.2" of snow fell, 5.6" below average. January's snowfall made up for December's lack and gave every impression of signalling another long, snowy winter as it accumulated to 38.7", nearly 9.1" over the average. Temperatures averaged 23.8°F, which was 1.4°F above average and kept Lake Ontario ice-free. The high was 56°F on 5 January; the low -8°F on 19 January. February had an average temperature of 30.4°F, approximately 6.4°F degrees above average, which tied for the 7th warmest February on record. The high was 65°F on 21 February, the low 0°F on 13 February. The snowfall for the month was 19.1", 7.1" below normal.

The mild winter weather kept many lakes and ponds open into early January. Seeds, cones, and fruits provided ample natural foods. Gene Huggins noted an abundance of staghorn sumac, common buckthorn, gray dogwood, highbush cranberry, frost grape, and multiflora rose and several birders noted the abundance of cones on many species of conifers. This bounty kept the number of birds down at feeders and most winter finches were absent. The lack of consistent cold and snow cover and the abundance of natural foods also allowed many species to linger into January. A warm front on 21 February brought a quick burst of early March migrants such as robins, Red-winged Blackbirds, grackles, and cowbirds, as well as Tundra Swan, Killdeer, and a few hawks.

Waterfowl and associated species were pretty average for the season, with no great rarities. Only 2-3 Great Blue Herons remained after the CBC's and

loons and grebes were hard to find after mid-January. Late Tundra Swans and Ruddy Ducks were a plus. King Eider was recorded for the first time since 1991 after having been nearly annual back to 1970 and the Barrow's Goldeneye was only the second winter report in the 90's. The five Hooded Mergansers recorded on the Old Forge CBC on 29 December were just a bit too optimistic in their choice of surroundings. White-winged gull numbers were low this season. It was possible to spend a day afield without finding either species.

Turkey Vultures were seen throughout the season in the Dewitt area for the second year and at least one Merlin continued to fly to evening roost in Syracuse's Onondaga Park, where they have been recorded since 1991. Goshawks went unreported in a year that is probably close to the low point in their approximate 10 year cycle. Red-tailed and Rough-legged hawks were both scarce, probably due to either good prey numbers elsewhere or lack of such here. The small population of Fish Crows first found in Syracuse in 1995 seems to have colonized a new site in Liverpool, along Onondaga Lake.

Both American Robins and Cedar Waxwings were scarce after early January, particularly puzzling in the case of robins, since food seemed plentiful and snow depths were below average in normal wintering areas. Some other half-hardy landbirds were well represented by wintering Hermit Thrush and Chipping. Field and Swamp sparrows. Gray Catbird and Eastern Towhee persisted well into January, but Winter Wren was not found after December. **Vesper Sparrow** was recorded for the first time in 37 years. Three warbler species was a very good total for the Region, although Yellow-rumped Warbler is probably the only species which can survive the season. Am. Tree Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco numbers seemed average with no large counts, but they were consistently found.

Purple Finches irrupted in late January, with many reports starting on the 24th. According to Gary Lee, Red and White-winged crossbills and Pine Siskins were common in the Adirondacks, and by season's end all three species were breeding. Only siskins made it to the rest of the Region in any numbers, although most reports were of one or two at feeders for brief stays. Evening Grosbeaks were not reported away from the Adirondacks, and few were found there away from feeders.

A total of 123 species was reported for the season, a very good Regional total. Oddest sighting for the season was 60 Snow Buntings which landed in a suburban Camillus yard during a snowstorm on 17 January where they fed for two minutes before disappearing back into the storm.

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**Abbreviations:** Bylle - Baldwinsville, CIM - Clay Marsh, DH - Derby Hill, DL - Delta Lake, FH - Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity, HIGMA -

Howland Island GMA. LOL - Lake Ontario Littoral. NH - New Hartford, OnonL - Onondaga Lake. Syr - Syracuse, UM - Utica Marsh.

**LOONS-DUCKS:** **Red-throated Loon:** singles Oswego 14 Dec & 15 Jan. **Com. Loon:** max nine LOL 5 Jan; last Oswego 15 Jan. **Pied-billed Grebe:** singles DL 2 Dec; OnonL 21 Dec; Bville 11 Jan; max and last five Oswego R 12 Jan. **Horned Grebe:** one DL 2 Dec; one OnonL 26 Jan; one LOL 9 Feb, only reports. **Red-necked Grebe:** two reports, one Oswego 1-4 Feb; one FH 23 Feb. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 31 Oswego 12 Jan; two Oswego entire period. **Great Blue Heron:** last UM 9 Jan; two OnonL, only birds to winter. **Tundra Swan:** max 14 OnonL 14-18 Jan; three Skaneateles L 19 Dec, record late; arr three Oriskany 24 Feb. **Mute Swan:** one Woodman Pd 18 Dec; two Sherrill Pd 19 Jan. **Snow Goose:** max four LOL 5 Jan (incl 1 Blue); also three Woodman Pd 18 Dec and one Webster Pd Syr 11 Jan. **Canada Goose:** max 2500 FH 23 Feb. **Wood Duck:** singles Bville & OnonL Jan-Feb; one Clay 9 Feb. **Green-winged Teal:** max seven Syr to 13 Jan; last one Bville 26-31 Jan. **Am. Black Duck:** max 207 OnonL 15 Jan. **N. Pintail:** max three Woodman Pd 4 Jan. **Gadwall:** max 29 OnonL 14 Jan. **Am. Wigeon:** four T Granby 22 Dec, only report. **Canvasback:** scattered mid-winter reports of one-two; max 16 FH 23 Feb. **Redhead:** mid-winter max 298 Skaneateles L and 60 OnonL 18 Jan; max 500 FH 23 Feb. **Ring-necked Duck:** one Woodman Pd 26 Dec-4 Jan; one Bville Jan-Feb; pair Oswego Feb. **Greater Scaup:** max 2300 FH 23 Feb. **Lesser Scaup:** max 12 FH 23 Feb. **King Eider:** one Nine Mile Pt 19 Jan, first report since 1991 (SA, MAK). **Oldsquaw:** max 38 Oswego 15 Jan. **Black Scoter:** one imm m dead in the intake canal at James A. Fitzpatrick Nuclear Power Plant. Scriba 24 Feb. **Surf Scoter:** one ad m Oswego 21 Jan-1 Feb. **White-winged Scoter:** max 12 LOL Scriba 1 Feb. **Com. Goldeneye:** max 1200 FH 23 Feb. **Barrow's Goldeneye:** one m Cross L 1 Jan (KM). **Bufflehead:** max 78 Oswego 19 Jan. **Hooded Merganser:** five Old Forge 29 Dec, late; max ten Oswego R 1 Feb. **Com. Merganser:** max 4790 OnonL 14 Jan; 2230 there 22 Feb. **Red-breasted Merganser:** two Chenango R Earlville 21 Dec, unusual; max 13 LOL 9 Feb. **Ruddy Duck:** one female Woodman Pd to 26 Dec; two OnonL 11-14 Jan with one remaining to 6 Feb.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** **Turkey Vulture:** at least two thought to have wintered Dewitt; arr one Pulaski 22 Feb. **Bald Eagle:** one imm Woodman Pd 4 Jan; one imm Cross L 2 Jan; one OnonL 9 Jan; two Oswego R after mid Jan. **N. Harrier:** one W. Winfield in Jan, only report after CBC's; arr one Clay 27 Feb. **Red-tailed Hawk:** low numbers Southern highlands; max 12 Clay 21 Dec. **Rough-legged Hawk:** max three Sangerfield 30 Dec; scarce, when found usually one/day. **Am. Kestrel:** max of two/day; 25 reported for season. **Merlin:** at least one wintered Syr; one Fabius 26 Feb. **Peregrine Falcon:** one Ilion 5



Feb, only report. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: only six reports of nine total. **Ruffed Grouse**: max four Paris 12 Dec. **Wild Turkey**: max 120 T Western 20 Jan; low snow depths did push them out of the woods in many places. **SORA**: two UM 9 Jan & one 11 Jan, second winter record (MP). **Am. Coot**: max 35 Woodman Pd 26 Dec; five singles in Jan; only Feb report one FH. **Killdeer**: no winter reports; arr one NH 21 Feb. **Bonaparte's Gull**: max five Oneida L 11 Dec; last one OnonL 18 Jan, late. **Ring-billed Gull**: max 2300 Oswego 26 Jan. **Herring Gull**: max 2700 OnonL 25 Jan. **Iceland Gull**: scarce, reports of singles after mid-Jan along Oswego R. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: one ad OnonL 12-29 Jan; one third winter Bvllle 14-26 Feb. **Glaucous Gull**: max three DL 24 Dec and Phoenix 29 Jan; most reports of one/day. **Great Black-backed Gull**: max 1150 Oswego R to Oswego Harbor 26 Jan.

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS**: **Mourning Dove**: max 49 Cicero 3 Feb. **E. Screech-Owl**: only three reports, but not actively looked for. **Great Horned Owl**: on nest NH 15 Feb and Kirkland 19 Feb. **Snowy Owl**: one Syr Airport thru Jan 14; one Oswego throughout; one Schroepel 31 Jan; one Sauquoit month of Feb. **Barred Owl**: two pair NH Feb. **Belted Kingfisher**: reported from nine locations; two-three wintered Phoenix, Bvllle, OnonL area. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: one at a Sauquoit feeder thru. **Black-backed Woodpecker**: one Canachagala L 10 Feb, only report. **N. Flicker**: max nine HIGMA 1 Jan; six Kirkland 25 Feb, good late season number.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS**: **Horned Lark**: mid-winter max 30 Kirkland 26 Dec & 19 Jan; 40 Ava 22 Feb, possibly new arrivals. **Am. Crow**: max 3700 Syr roost 21 Dec. **Fish Crow**: two-three OnonL after mid-Jan, new site; max six Shop City Syr 21 Dec, some there all season. **Com. Raven**: three reports away from Adks; two Remsen 7 Dec; two Boylston 9 Feb; two Redfield 22 Feb. **Tufted Titmouse**: max nine NH 21 Dec; one Old Forge 29 Dec, unusual. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: reports mostly from breeding locations. **Brown Creeper**: max five NH 20 Dec. **Carolina Wren**: one Holland Patent 2 Feb; one Fayetteville from 11 Feb, only reports. **Winter Wren**: two UM 19 Dec; one Dewitt 21 Dec, only reports. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: max six HIGMA 1 Jan and NH 8 Feb. **E. Bluebird**: max 10 NH 21 Dec; reports from ten other sites of 23 total. **Hermit Thrush**: one UM 5 Dec; one Syr 1 Jan; one Brookfield 15 Feb. **Am. Robin**: max 244 CIM 12 Dec, only small numbers after early Jan despite available food. **Gray Catbird**: one Dewitt 21 Dec; one Bvllle feeder to 24 Jan. **N. Mockingbird**: max three OnonL 21 Dec. **AM. PIPIT**: one OnonL 21 Dec, record late (BP). **Cedar Waxwing**: max 180 NH 24 Dec; scarce after early Jan. **N. Shrike**: max two Hannibal 22 Dec; other reports of birds at 14 locations, none regular. **European Starling**: *nest in Scriba with at least 3 y 5 Jan*; max 2400 Syr Airport 18 Feb.



**VIREOS-WARBLEDERS** Cape May Warbler: one Parish feeder to 22 Dec, record late. **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: max three Kirkland 19 Feb; two Green Lakes SP 13 Feb. **Com. Yellowthroat**: one UM 19 Dec.

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS**: **E. Towhee**: one T Onondaga 9 Jan; one Bville feeder to 29 Jan. **Am. Tree Sparrow**: max 70 Bridgeport 8 Feb; many counts of 20-40. **Chipping Sparrow**: one Paris feeder entire period. **Field Sparrow**: one Paris 4 Dec; one at feeder in Pompey to 8 Feb. **VESPER SPARROW**: one Port Byron 1 Jan, first winter record since 1960 (BP). **Song Sparrow**: max nine NH 21; numbers quickly decreased in Jan. **Swamp Sparrow**: one Woodman Pd 18 Dec; one UM 19 Dec & 11 Jan; two Bville 1 Feb. **White-throated Sparrow**: max 35 CIM 4 Dec; scarce in Feb. **Dark-eyed Junco**: max 33 Parish 27 Jan. **Lapland Longspur**: two Clay 17 Jan; two Paris 3 Feb, only reports. **Snow Bunting**: mid-winter max 100 Clay 17 Jan; 10,000 T Stockbridge 24 Feb, "fields on both sides of road solid for a mile" (Leland Fanning *vide* DC). **Red-winged Blackbird**: max 14 Woodman Pd 18 Dec; six Old Forge 29 Dec, unusual; arr one Sangerfield 15 Feb. **E. Meadowlark**: last three T Western 1 Jan. **Rusty Blackbird**: max 13 CIM 8 Jan. **Com. Grackle**: max two Clay 21 Dec; last Clay 9 Jan; arr Fayetteville 21 Feb. **Brown-headed Cowbird**: max 18 Brookfield 30 Dec; last eight Fabius 20 Jan; arr Fayetteville 24 Feb. **Baltimore Oriole**: one Bville 15 Dec; one Syr 21 Dec; one Dewitt 26 Dec; last winter reports from 1980. **Purple Finch**: widespread invasion starting 24 Jan; max 40 Pompey after 26 Jan. **House Finch**: max 60 CIM 26 Jan. **Red Crossbill**: max 12 Old Forge 2 Feb; two Kirkland 19 Feb; two Georgetown 20 Feb. **White-winged Crossbill**: small numbers breeding Adks. **Pine Siskin**: widespread Adks; elsewhere max 30 NH 19 Feb; mostly sporadic reports of 1-4/day regionwide. **Am. Goldfinch**: max 71 Parish 3 Jan. **Evening Grosbeak**: max four Old Forge 22 Feb; no reports away from Adks.

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## REGION 6 - ST LAWRENCE

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The winter of 1996-97 was overall very mild, however winter conditions extended well into spring. December was very mild after significant snowfalls, particularly in traditional snowbelt areas during the mid two weeks of November. The last three weeks of January were very cold throughout the Region. A few extremely heavy snow bursts occurred, with the Town of Montague in Lewis County recording eight feet of snow in a 48 hour period in January. February resumed the relatively mild temperatures and low snowfall pattern of December.

Highlights of the winter include: 1) a widespread Snowy Owl invasion, 2) good variety of waterbirds and waterfowl, 3) spectacular growth in local Wild Turkey populations, 4) good numbers of gulls particularly along the St. Lawrence, 5) good numbers and increased presence of Bald Eagle, 6) early return of spring migrants in late February, 7) good numbers of many half-hardies, 8) excellent numbers of Lapland Longspur in northwest Jefferson County, and 9) increasing numbers and skill levels for Jefferson County observers, resulting in more data for Regional editors.

Negatives for the winter include: 1) poor numbers of many common waterfowl despite a mild winter, 2) virtual lack of winter finches except Purple Finch, 3) poor numbers of most wintering mouse raptors, and 4) few observers in Lewis/St. Lawrence counties

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**Abbreviations:** BC -Barnes Corners area Twn Pinckney LEW; CBC-Christmas Bird Count; CV-Town of Cape Vincent JEFF; EDB - El Dorado Beach Preserve Twn Ellisburg JEFF; LOnt - Lake Ontario nearshore waters; LWMA -Lakeview Wildlife Management Area Twn Ellisburg JEFF; MASSLR - St. Lawrence River Town of Massena STLA; MSPD - Moses Saunders Power Dam and Vicinity Twn Massena STLA; NWJ-Towns of Brownville,Cape Vincent and Lyme JEFF; Pillar Pt - Twn Brownville JEFF; Pt Pen - Point Peninsula Twn Lyme JEFF; STLR - St. Lawrence River; StPt - Stony Pt Twn Henderson JEFF; TMPT - Three Mile Point Area Twn Lyme JEFF; WFC - Federation NYS Bird Clubs Waterfowl Count; WHWMA - Wilson Hill Wildlife Management Area Twn Louisville STLA.

**LOONS-DUCKS:** Red-throated Loon: six to seven per day MASSLR 13-21 Dec (BDL), very high numbers for this Region at any season and remarkable

for Dec. **Com. Loon**: six to nine per day MASSLR 5-21 Dec, many for so late; one WFC SLR. **Pied-billed Grebe**: one Pt Pen 21 Dec; one MASSLR 14 Jan, unusual in winter. **Horned Grebe**: one Pt Pen 3 Dec, only report of this decreasing species. **Double-crested Cormorant**: increasing populations are resulting in increased occurrence in early-mid winter, one to three per day MASSLR to 12 Jan; two TMPT 19 Dec; one Wescott Beach State Park JEFF 4 Jan; still scare in late Jan and Feb. **Great Blue Heron**: one per day LOnt and SLR to dep Pt Pen 4 Jan; one New Boston CBC 30 Dec in the core of the snowbelt was extraordinary. **Tundra Swan**: impressive possibly record number of late migrants in Dec; max 35 to 45 per day Pt Pen and TMPT thru Christmas; 19 still at TMPT 9 Jan, probable; two TMPT 25 Feb.(RJW), may have wintered, but are more likely early migrants. These numbers are unprecedented for Region 6, but reflect a trend of increasing frequency and abundance in northwestern JEFF during late fall early winter. **Mute Swan**: two WHWMA 21 Dec (MB); 4-5 per day LWMA 12-19 Dec; two Massena CBC, reflect increasing local populations. An eradication campaign, including direct killing of adults is needed. **Snow Goose**: 120 CV 27 Dec (NL), late migrants; one LWMA 6-28 Feb (GS), rare wintering bird; both are reflective of increasing populations of this species. **Canada Goose**: widespread along LOnt/SLR in flocks of 15-2500 thru mid Jan; max 4850-5200 MASSLR Dec; 1500-2000 wintered LWMA; arr flocks of 30-50 moving over Watertown 18 Feb. **Wood Duck**: female Pt Pen 5-21 Dec, only report. **Green-winged Teal**: one MASSLR 21-28 Dec, only report, rare in winter. **Am. Black Duck**: 2-22 per day LOnt/SLR to mid Jan; 5-10 per day thereafter; max 140 MSPD 21 Dec; 83 WFC. **Mallard**: max 1587 MASSLR 21 Dec; 900-1000 per day there to mid Jan; fewer thereafter; 30-100 per day elsewhere to late Jan; 10 to 50 per day Feb. **N. Pintail**: singles MASSLR 12 Jan and 20 Feb, probably the same bird; 5-15 per day MASSLR to mid Jan; max 43 MSPD WFC; none after third week of Jan; 11 Pt Pen 21 Dec, only non-SLR report. **Canvasback**: three Wescott Beach State Park, JEFF, only report of this declining species. **Ring-necked Duck**: male Wescott Beach State Park JEFF 4 Dec; male Grass R StLA 21 Dec; three males Henderson Harbor Jeff, presumably late migrants; more unusual are two males MASSLR 22 Jan (BL), high numbers of reports for winter. **Greater Scaup**: very low numbers overall; this once very common species may be declining locally; 2000 Black R Bay Jeff 14 Dec, only significant count; all other counts less than 25 per day scattered LOnt/SLR. **Lesser Scaup**: three MASSLR 12 Jan, only report. **Oldsquaw**: max 3000 EDB 5 Feb; 200 Henderson Harbor JEFF 13 Dec; only a few other scattered reports of two-ten per day LOnt; virtually none reported on SLR. **Black Scoter**: one to four per day MASSLR thru 14 Jan, unusual, all females or imm. **White-winged Scoter**: two per day MASSLR 12-15 Jan. **Com. Goldeneye**: widespread as 50-250 per day LOnt/SLR thru; max 1280 MASSLR 8 Feb; with declines in both Greater

Scaup and Oldsquaw this species is now the most widespread and common wintering diving duck in our Region. **Barrow's Goldeneye**: male Oak Pt Twn Hammond STLA 3-29 Dec (NL); pr MSPD 15 Jan-8 Feb (mob); probably rare but regular in most years on SLR and now being detected by increasing observation. **Bufflehead**: 20-75 per day LOnt/SLR thru mid Jan; max 165 NWJ 12 Dec; less than 10 per day late Jan-Feb, scarce. **Hooded Merganser**: one to five per day NWJ and MASSLR thru mid Jan, excellent numbers; max 10 MSPD 21 Dec (MB); male MASSLR 8 Feb, only report thereafter. **Com. Merganser**: as with Greater Scaup, this formerly more common species was present in reduced numbers, than <100 per day most LOnt counts; max 450-530 per day MASSLR Dec, quite in contrast to several thousand per day in that area a few years ago; only 10-100 per day scattered in Jan; fewer Feb. **Red-breasted Merganser**: max 19 WFC; all other counts one to four per day LOnt/SLR thru late Jan; none thereafter.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS**: **Turkey Vulture**: one Watertown CBC, report rejected for lack of sufficient details. Despite this species increasing populations all winter reports at these northern latitudes must be fully verified. **Bald Eagle**: one to three per day at several scattered locations along LOnt, increasing; highest numbers still along SLR between Wellsley Island and Morristown where 6-12 a day now normal; max 19 there 14 Jan. **N. Harrier**: one to four per day NWJ thru Jan two per day Feb; max nine Pt Pen 1 Jan (LE); unreported away from NWJ and Twn Ellisburg Jeff. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: total nine thru, primarily singles. **Cooper's Hawk**: total ten thru, primarily singles. **N. Goshawk**: total six, including five MASSLR; one New Boston CBC. **Red-tailed Hawk**: one to six per day widespread; max 20 Watertown CBC; 15 NWJ 11 Feb; ten New Boston CBC, high count for snowbelt area and included two in Twn Montague LEW with several feet of snow on ground; presumably these adults were hunting superabundant red squirrels. **Rough-legged Hawk**: most counts one to seven per day NWJ thru Jan, mediocre numbers; some increase in Feb to 10-16 per day; scarce elsewhere. **Am. Kestrel**: total 6 singles to mid Jan, very scarce. **Gray Partridge**: scarce in usual haunts in NWJ, three coveys of 8-12 only. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: a few singles thru, probably stocked birds. **Ruffed Grouse**: one to four per day thru, fair numbers; max 14 New Boston CBC; ten twn Louisville STLA 21 DEC, good non-CBC count. **Wild Turkey**: flocks of 10-25 widespread; max 64 each New Boston CBC and Twns Harrisburg and Lowville LEW 4 Jan. **Bonaparte's Gull**: one MSPD 5 Dec, only report. **Ring-billed Gull**: 100 to 250 per day MASSLR Dec; few thereafter there; scarce everywhere mid Jan-mid Feb; arr in flocks Henderson JEFF 21 Feb. **Herring Gull**: max 3759 MASSLR 5 Dec; 1000-1550 per day there to early Jan; 200 or less per day thereafter; < 10 per day Lake Ontario, scarce. **Iceland Gull**: one to five per day eastern SLR thru; none elsewhere. **Glaucous Gull**: one to four per

day eastern SLR thru; max 12 MSPD 14 Jan (BDL). **Great Black-backed Gull**: max 3295 MASSLR 14 Jan, may be Regional record; 1000 plus per day regular there Dec; fewer thereafter; LOnt counts mostly less than 20 per day.

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS**: **Mourning Dove**: 10 to 40 per day in lowlands thru; max 141 Watertown CBC; six New Boston CBC, unusual; some wintered in the snowbelt at feeders in Twn Lorraine JEFF(DSL) reflecting continued population expansion. **E. Screech-Owl**: total three singles. **Great Horned Owl**: total 11; max four Towns of Louisville and Massena 21 Dec. **Snowy Owl**: widespread as one to four per day in all areas including open Tug Hill Plateau, a large invasion involving a minimum of 50 plus individuals. **NORTHERN HAWK OWL**: one Daly Rd near Brasher STLA 8-28 Feb (DDTI,mob), about 1.5 miles from last winter's sighting, possibly the same individual. **Barred Owl**: total three singles. **Short-eared Owl**: one to two per day scattered NWJ Dec-Jan, scarce; none Feb. **Belted Kingfisher**: total four singles to mid Jan; none thereafter. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: still scarce in our Region with most record from southwestern JEFF; one Southwick Beach State Park Twn Ellisburg 13 Dec (GS); one Henderson 8 Jan (LBC), conform to this pattern. **Downy Woodpecker**: one to five per day widespread; max 12 New Boston CBC. **Hairy Woodpecker**: one to two per day in lowlands; two to four per day in highlands; max eight New Boston CBC. **N. Flicker**: one to two per day scattered in lowlands; max six Pt Pen 13 Dec; one there 8 Feb, only Feb record. **Pileated Woodpecker**: total four singles.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS**: **Horned Lark**: 5-25 per day NWJ thru third week of Jan; 70-100 per day NWJ after 28 Jan, reflects arrival of migrants; six males on territories in CV 9 Feb (GS). **Tree Swallow**: six Wilson Bay CV 12 Dec and one Merchant Rd CV 14 Dec (MBW,FM),extremely late migrants. **Blue Jay**: widespread 5-20 per day; max 214 new Boston CBC. **Am. Crow**: scarce NWJ 3-8 per day thru; 10-25 per day elsewhere in lowlands; winter max 111 Watertown CBC; arr in flocks in NWJ and Henderson 14 Feb; 100-440 per day thereafter. **Com. Raven**: max four New Boston CBC; one to two per day BC and Lorraine thru, reflect relatively mild winter on Tug Hill Plateau as species abandons this area in severe winters; remains scarce in lowlands. **Black-capped Chickadee**:10-30 per day, widespread; max 314 New Boston CBC. **Tufted Titmouse**: one 7-19 Feb in snowbelt at Lorraine (DSL); seven twn Louisville STLA 21 Dec (MB), extraordinary; continued slow expansion in our area. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: one to three per day scattered thru; in contrast to last year when species abandoned the high country, counts on Tug Hill were normal; max 19 New Boston CBC. **White-breasted Nuthatch**: one to three per day widespread; max nine Watertown CBC. **Brown Creeper**: several counts of one to four per day to mid Jan; only scattered singles thereafter.



**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** one to four per day at scattered locations; max 17 New Boston CBC. **E. Bluebird:** several small groups of two to eight persisted thru at lowland locations primarily along LOnt; at least a total of 22-30 individuals, high numbers for winter. **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD:** male Pt Pen 19 Feb thru (FM,DP, mob), incredibly, the second Regional record in four years at a site less than three miles from the 1993 record. **HERMIT THRUSH:** one wintered at the Potsdam STLA feeder of John Carvill (*fide* NA). **Am. Robin:** widespread in lowlands as 10-20 per day at areas such as StPt, Pt Pen and western SLR; fewer 5-10 per day Feb. **Cedar Waxwing :** 15-50 per day at widely scattered locations thru. **N. Shrike:** widely scattered as one to four per day thru; a fair year that pales only in contrast to last year's massive invasion.

**VIREOS-WARBLEDERS:** none.

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS:** **N. Cardinal:** two to six per day thru in lowlands; max 10-12 several areas; still scarce in the highlands. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** 15-25 per day, widespread; max 170 Watertown CBC. **CHIPPING SPARROW:** one wintered at CV feeder (MBW). **Song Sparrow:** total eight, one to two per day Watertown and NWJ Dec; none thereafter. **White-throated Sparrow:** one to five per day NWJ and Watertown thru Dec; max one to ten per day at CV feeder. **Dark-eyed Junco:** 5-20 per day scattered thru. **Lapland Longspur:** 5-30 per day NWJ Jan-Feb, good numbers; max 75 CV 4 Feb. **Snow Bunting:** 40 to 100 per day NWJ; max 400-500 per day NWJ several dates in Jan-Feb. **Red-winged Blackbird:** scattered one to two per day Dec; winter max 13 Massena Center STLA 21 Dec; arr widespread JEFF 21-23 Feb. **E. Meadowlark:** four Pt Pen 15 Jan (DP), only record. **Com. Grackle:** three singles Dec; three Watertown CBC; one Pt Pen 15 Jan, definite wintering birds; one Pt Pen 18 Feb and one Chaumont 22 Feb may be migrants. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** four Massena Center STLA 21 Dec; one Pt Pen 7-17 Jan, only records. **Purple Finch:** one Lorraine Jeff 11 Dec, only record prior to 15 January; significant invasion after mid Jan, 10-70 per day widespread thru; max 100 Morristown 2 Feb (DMB). **House Finch:** Numbers continue decline particularly in urban areas where most exhibit eye infection; most counts 5-30 per day scattered; many areas have none. **Red Crossbill:** two Town of Montague LEW on New Boston CBC (Bill Purcell), only report. **Pine Siskin:** widely scattered reports of 2-12 in Feb. **Am. Goldfinch:** 10-30 per day Dec-Jan in lowlands; fewer in Feb; Tug Hill dep five New Boston CBC. **House Sparrow:** max 201 Watertown CBC.



## REGION 7 - ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M. C. PETERSON

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Meteorologically, this was a dreary winter, marked more by clouds and rain than by snow. A blocking front off the Atlantic Coast 7 December resulted in 3" of snow at Ellenburg the next day. The 15 December Plattsburgh CBC was held on bare ground, with the greatest monthly snow depth 8" on High Peaks trails during the Elizabethtown CBC on 21 December. Gary Lee reported that at Inlet, "The first week of January it was 50° with rain and two days later we had 18" of snow." Keene Valley, in the shadow of the High Peaks, received just 32" in the same 9-10 January snowstorm. Plattsburgh reached 38° on 16 January, before temperatures plunged to -20° at Malone the next day. Coldest day of the winter was 19 January, with Inlet -36°, Newcomb -34°, and Lake Placid -26°, but by 22 January Plattsburgh was back to 41°. The following weeks were snowy, with 6" falling at Newcomb 5 February and an accumulation of three feet at Inlet by that same week. After several more inches on Valentine's Day, a thaw set in at the end of the season, with Plattsburgh in the 40°s. The sun even came out for a few days.

Ornithologically, the winter wasn't as dismal as the view at most feeders suggested. In spite of the usual, plaintive chorus of, "Where are all the birds?", a record 99 species (plus a hybrid and a morph) was recorded. Lake Champlain never entirely froze, the wild food crop was good, and woods and fields were relatively free of snow for most of the winter.

Waterbirds took advantage of the open water and mild conditions. A late inland Common Loon lingered on Upper Saranac Lake into mid-December, and a Pied-billed Grebe was on Coll Bay, ESSE, in early January. A Double-crested Cormorant on Raquette Pond 1 December was late inland, with others at Westport in mid-December and Willsboro Bay in January. Westport still had **three** Great Blue Herons in December, and the species was found on an incredible *five* CBCs that month, lingering at Westport into January; Hollis White found the last in mid-January on the St. Regis Mohawk Reservation. An Am. Wigeon stayed at the Plattsburgh city beach until late December. Ausable Point had a drake Barrow's Goldeneye from 3 December, while a hen was near a flock of Common Goldeneyes on Whallon's Bay 11 January; by the next day Ausable Point (some 20 miles to the north) still had a drake among a similar raft of Commons, plus two pairs of Barrow's nearer shore! This exceeds the Regional maxima of three at Ausable Point on 10 November 1954 (Bull 1974).

Numbers of wintering Bald Eagles continued to increase, admittedly helped by the expanse of open water. Some high counts included five on the Ferrisburg CBC, six counted between Ticonderoga-Westport by the Amtrak "Adirondack" crew in late Dec, four tallied by the trainmen from Port Henry-Wickham Marsh

in late January, a total of **13** on the NYS Waterfowl Count/Bald Eagle Survey, and a Regional record of **eight** in one location around Whallon's Bay on 9 February. And away from Champlain, there were inland sightings at Big Tupper Lake, Forked Lake, Raquette Lake, and Saranac Lake. **Golden Eagles** appear to be enjoying a similar renaissance, albeit on a lesser scale. Following sightings of a Golden at Wadhams and Westport in the winter of 1994-95, there were **four** records in winter 1996-97: feeding in a meadow on Crown Point peninsula; at Jenkins Mt., FRAN; at Wadhams (all December); and at Split Rock with an adult and an immature Bald Eagle in late February. Falcons also put in rare winter appearances, with Am. Kestrel, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon reports from Clinton County.

Half-hardy landbirds, in spite of the favorable conditions, were something of a mixed bag, with reports of just three N. Flickers, a single Carolina Wren, and a total of only 20 E. Bluebirds. The Elizabethtown CBC located a record **285** Am. Robins, but other counts found only 20 of the overwintering birds. Cedar Waxwings were found as far inland as Tupper Lake, and sizeable flocks wintered in the Champlain Valley; Bill Krueger counted over a hundred on the SUNY Plattsburgh campus with its fruiting ornamentals in late February. The two waxwings are largely exclusive here in winter, and Bohemian Waxwings were absent for only the third winter since 1979-80, unless some should show up by April. Five Song Sparrows, a December. **Swamp Sparrow** found by Dean Spaulding in the Webb Royce Swamp, eight White-throated Sparrows, and an overwintering **White-crowned Sparrow** at the White's feeder in Hogsburg, was a good showing for this Region.

Among the winter finches, 13 Pine Grosbeaks on the Plattsburgh CBC provided the only report. Purple Finches had their best winter since the invasion of 1976, with 123 on the Elizabethtown CBC (but still far short of the '76 explosion of 610). Bob Yunick drove 112 miles in ESSE-HAMI 11 January, and 130 miles in HAMI 2 February, without finding any crossbill roadkills. (Gary Lee commented, "The ravens and crows stayed around deer feeders and patrolled the highways for crossbills and siskins," so perhaps they were just ahead of Bob!) But Yunick did see Red Crossbills at four spots along Rt. 30, HAMI, on 11 January. On 2 February, he had two on Rt. 8, one in Sabael, and four in Wells. Ted Mack noted Red Crossbill pairs about every five miles near Paul Smiths by late January, with other reports from the Saranac Lake CBC and Bob Hagar. At Inlet, Lee reported, "The Red and White-winged crossbills were everywhere, singing and feeding on the abundant cone crop." White-winged were found on both the Elizabethtown and Saranac Lake CBCs, and Steve Hall and Matthew Perry had "lots of singing" at Ferd's Bog in mid-December. By mid January, the Thaxtons found them eating spruce cones above Marcy Dam and along the Heart Lake Road. Richard Clements counted 200 around Lake Placid in mid-February, with three singing males up the Chubb River and small flocks of 15-20 along Rts. 28 and 30 south of Saranac

Lake. Not as spectacular as 1985, but a good crossbill winter, with evidence of nesting by both species. The 503 Pine Siskins on the Saranac Lake CBC and 431 Am. Goldfinches on the Plattsburgh count give a suggestion of the numbers present. Both finches were abundant where cones and seeds were available, piling into feeders only during the few storms. In contrast, the Saranac Lake count had but 53 Evening Grosbeaks, and they were similarly scarce elsewhere, the thirty-something at the Lee feeder being an exception. Even when found, they were often received with comments like, "The first one of the winter!" (Charlcie Delehanty), "My only ones of the entire winter." (Bob Yunick), and "Only ones all year." (Pat Thaxton), all experienced observers. Near Elizabethtown these once maligned, now longed-for grosbeaks are more frequent as family groups at feeders in summer than as winter visitants. After accepting winter as a seemingly endless series of 50 lb. bags of sunflower seed for several decades, we may be learning that our largess was only happenstance created by a spruce budworm outbreak in Canada. Which in turn prompts the question of what is "normal," healthy forests or lots of budworm-eating birds?

**Contributors:** Tom Baker, Richard Clements, Charlcie Delehanty, Dave Franzi, Robert Hagar, Steve Hall, Judy Heintz, Candy Hess, Selma Isil, Suzy Johnson, Hal Klein, Russ Koch, Bill Krueger, Richard MacDonald, Theodore Mack, Larry Masters, Jeff Meyers, Charles Mitchell, Edith Mitchell, Nancy Olsen, Lydia & Paul Osenbaugh, Matthew Perry, John & Susan Peterson, Mary Purcell, Judy Ross, Dean Spaulding, Trisha Spaulding, Carol Spierto, John & Patricia Thaxton, Robert Wei, Cap & Uta Wister, Robert Yunick.

**Abbreviations:** CICBC - Champlain Islands CBC, 22 Dec; ECBC - Elizabethtown CBC, 21 Dec; FCBC - Ferrisburg CBC, 21 Dec; FWC - Federation Waterfowl Count, 11-15 Jan; PCBC - Plattsburgh CBC, 15 Dec; SLCBC - Saranac Lake CBC, 28 Dec.

**LOONS-DUCKS:** **Com. Loon:** Upper Saranac L 13 Dec (TB); max 12 PCBC. **Pied-billed Grebe:** Coll Bay 4 Jan (RM,JP,DS), unseasonal. **Horned Grebe:** max 71 PCBC and 52 FWC, extremely high numbers. **Red-necked Grebe:** two FWC, only report. **Double-crested Cormorant:** Raquette Pd 1 Dec (EM); Westport 16 Dec (JP,DS); Willsboro Bay 11 Jan (TM,JP,RW)-12 Jan (RM,JP,MP,DS), record late. **Great Blue Heron:** three Westport 6 Dec; two Westport 4 Jan (RM,JP,DS); last St. Regis Mohawk Reservation 15 Jan (HW). **Snow Goose:** 83 CICBC; two Port Henry 4 Jan (RM,JP,DS), late. **Canada Goose:** max 1,666 FWC, a few overwintered. **Am. Wigeon:** three PCBC; Plattsburgh city beach 17-23 Dec (BK,CM), late CLIN by eight days. **Canvasback:** max 4 FWC, typical of years following crash. **Redhead:** max three drakes Ausable Pt 23 Feb (NO), ditto. **Greater Scaup:** 480 FWC, a response to zebra mussels? **Lesser Scaup:** 22 FWC, ditto? **Oldsquaw:** six Wickham Marsh 11-12 Jan (JP), good here. **Surf Scoter:** Plattsburgh Bay 15

Dec (BK,CM), late CLIN by 22 days. **White-winged Scoter**: Ausable Pt 3 Dec; Wilcox docks 8 Dec (BK,CM), good finds. **Barrow's Goldeneye**: drake Ausable Pt 3 Dec (BK); hen Whallon's Bay 11 Jan (RM,MP,DS); Ausable Pt had drake 24 Dec (BK,CM) and two pair plus an ad drake 12 Jan (CH,JR), for a total of six on the FWC, counting the ESSE hen! **Hooded Merganser**: 35 FWC on Heart Bay, L George.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS**: **Bald Eagle**: two Westport 7 Dec; six Ti-Westport 23 Dec (Amtrak crew); five FCBC; one SLCBC; ad Big Tupper 23 Dec, 5 & 26 Jan, 24 Feb, where imm was harrassed by crows 24 Feb (CD); Forked L late Dec; feeding on dead deer Raquette 1 (GL); **13 FWC**; four Westport 6 Jan; four Port Henry-Wickham Marsh 17 Jan (Amtrak crew); Chazy R 23 Dec and ads Ausable Pt area 23 Dec-26 Feb; max **two ads, 6 imm**s Whallon's Bay 9 Feb (RM,JP,DS); plus various newspaper reports, an exceptional showing. **N. Harrier**: seven reports between 21 Dec-23 Feb with two on the CICBC, an exceptional showing. **Golden Eagle**: Crown Pt 18 Dec (C&UW), feeding in meadow near bridge; Jenkins Mt, FRAN, 22 Dec (TM); Wadhams 25 Dec (MG); Split Rock 22 Feb (JP,DS), with ad & imm Bald Eagle. **Am. Kestrel**: Plattsburgh 17 Dec. **Merlin**: Plattsburgh 19 Jan, apparent window-kill. **Peregrine Falcon**: ad male Jarvis & River Rds, CLIN, 10 Dec (BK,CM). **Wild Turkey**: max 50 daily Sciota barnyard. **Iceland Gull**: PCBC, a good find. **Glaucous Gull**: 1st winter Westport 4 Jan (RM,JP,DS), similarly good.

**DOVES-WOODPECKERS**: **E. Screech-Owl**: Wadhams 9 Jan (DS), mobbed by jays and crows. **Snowy Owl**: bird injured Ray Brook Federal Prison 18 Nov rehabilitated, banded, and released Essex 8 Dec (JP,DS,CS); another was at Chazy R 5-7 Dec (BK,CM,JM). **Short-eared Owl**: Essex 21 Dec (Carole Slatkin); Jay 18 Jan (L&P0), rarely reported. **Three-toed Woodpecker**: male Ferd's Bog 17 Dec (SH,MP); two Avalanche Pass 3 Feb (J&PT), "attracted to our squeaky ski bindings." **Black-backed Woodpecker**: SLCBC; three Ferd's Bog 17 Dec (SH,MP); male Mt. Van Hoevenberg x-country trail 16 Feb (RC). **N. Flicker**: FCBC; ECBC; Westport 4 Jan (RM JP,DS).

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLING**: **Gray Jay**: five Ferd's Bog 17 Dec; six SLCBC. **Com. Raven**: max 21 ECBC. **Boreal Chickadee**: Ferd's Bog; four ECBC; five SLCBC. **Tufted Titmouse**: four Westport feeder 4 Jan; Jay 18 Jan. **Carolina Wren**: one ECBC, only report. **E. Bluebird**: 12 FCBC; eight ECBC. **Am. Robin**: max 285 ECBC; one Tupper Lake 2-7 Dec (CD), feeding on winterberries. **Cedar Waxwing**: max 100+ SUNY Plattsburgh 24 Feb. **N. Shrike**: 11 reports, an unexpectedly strong showing in the wake of last winter's invasion.

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS:** N. Cardinal: max 26 PCBC. Am. Tree Sparrow: max 168 FCBC; flock of 56 Webb Royce Swamp 11 Jan (TM,JP,RW). Song Sparrow: CICBC; PCBC; SLCBC; Hogansburg & Plattsburgh feeders. Swamp Sparrow: Webb Royce Swamp 18 Dec (DS), record late. White-throated Sparrow: seven SLCBC; one Tupper L 25 Feb (CD). White-crowned Sparrow: Hogansburg feeder 24 Dec thru (Denise & Hollis White). Dark-eyed Junco: max 203 ECBC; wintered Inlet for first time (GL), abundant and widespread for a bird not always present here in winter. Lapland Longspur: five CLIN reports of 1-6 birds 16 Jan-10 Feb (BK), remarkable for this Region. Snow Bunting: max 93 SLCBC unexpected, as were 25 Riverside Drive horse barn on the outskirts of Lake Placid 15 Feb. Red-winged Blackbird: max 60 FCBC; arr Upper Saranac L & Wadhams 22 Feb; eight arr Tupper L feeder 28 Feb. Pine Grosbeak: 13 PCBC, only report. Purple Finch: max 123 ECBC. House Finch: max 102 PCBC. Red Crossbill: nine SLCBC; pairs about every 5 mi. Paul Smiths 22 Jan (TM); two males McMaster & Forest Home Rds 21 Feb (RH); undoubtedly nested. White-winged Crossbill: ECBC; 54 SLCBC; max 200 Lake Placid 15 Feb; three singing males Chubb R and small flocks of 15-20 along Rts. 28 & 30; 12 Ferd's Bog "lots of singing" 17 Dec; ten eating spruce cones above Marcy Dam 17 Jan; four Heart Lake Rd 18 Jan; undoubtedly nested. Pine Siskin: max 503 SLCBC; 283 ECBC; 250 Lake Placid 15 Feb. Am. Goldfinch: max 431 PCBC; 382 SLCBC; 345 ECBC; 161 FCBC, indicative of widespread invasion. Evening Grosbeak: max 53 SLCBC; 14 ECBC; 2 CICBC; none FCBC or PCBC, indicative of decline. House Sparrow: max 156 CICBC.

**Addendum:** Canada Goose: white-on-green collar Point au Roche 25 Oct 96 (BK) banded Grand Ledge, Eaton Co., MI (NW Lansing) 6 Jul 95 in study of local Giant Canada Geese by Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources.



## REGION 8 - HUDSON-MOHAWK

JANE DENKER GRAVES

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The winter of 1996-97 was generally warm and cloudy. As reported from the Albany County Airport, December's mean temperature was 33.8°, 7.3° above normal, with no below zero days. Sunshine averaged 17%, 22% below normal. There was 4.99" of precipitation, 2.06" above normal, making 1996 the wettest year of the century and the sixth wettest on record. There was only 11.1" of snow; none stayed on the ground for any length of time. January averaged 22.7°, 2.1° above normal. There were only three sub-zero days. It was a cloudy month, with only 29% sunshine, 17% below normal. Precipitation was a slightly below normal 1.67", with 16.7" of snow, slightly greater than normal. February averaged 30.7°, 6.9° above normal, with 42% sunshine, 10% less than normal. A record high 68° was set on the 22nd; many early migrants arrived on that date. Precipitation measured a slightly below normal 2", with 8.2" of snow.

Lakes, ponds, and rivers remained open through much of January. Wild food crops were good, leading to minimal feeder activity. Birds remained dispersed throughout the period. However, the eleven reporting CBCs had generally high counts both of species and individuals. The Federation Waterfowl Count in January produced only 13 species and 7826 individuals. Bald Eagles continued to winter locally in good numbers, with the numbers of immature birds reported up significantly from last year. Mike Peterson reported to me that 25 eagles were counted between Rhinecliff and Albany on one February 28 train trip. Gulls were concentrated in the usual Colonie landfill/Cohoes areas of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers; in addition, this year good numbers were found on the Hudson River at Coxsackie and Catskill. Lingering land birds were well represented on CBCs, with Eastern Phoebe, Winter and Marsh wrens, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Chipping, Field, Fox and Swamp sparrows being reported. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was seen on the Chatham count, a Regional first for December. Another Regional December first was the **House Wren** seen by Tom Palmer on three different December dates. In addition, a White-crowned Sparrow overwintered at Five Rivers. Except for Purple Finch, there were few winter finches reported.

The rarity of the season was a *Yellow-throated Warbler*, found on December 7 on a Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club waterfowl field trip. The bird, an immature female probably of the *albilora* subspecies, was frequenting a strip of small evergreens on the edge of a Mechanicville shopping center. It remained at least through December 16 and was seen and photographed by many. This is the first appearance of Yellow-throated Warbler in the Region since 1984,



when a pair nested at South Cairo, GREE, and a fourth Regional record. Rarities not previously mentioned include Greater White-fronted Goose, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Thayer's Gull. The 126 species reported included 25 waterfowl, 11 hawks, 7 gulls, 6 owls, 8 sparrows, and 7 finches.

**Contributors:** Ken Able; Elliott Adams; Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports (ADBC); Hudson Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York (BEN); Brad and Beth Bidwell; Robert Budliger; Paul Connor; Bill Cook; Walter Ellison; Larry Federman; Laurie Freeman; Jane Graves; Rich Guthrie; Ron Harrower; Tom Lathrop; William Lee; Andy Mason; Nancy Martin; Laura Meade; Tom Palmer; Ray Perry; William Purcell; Barbara Putnam; David Russell; Jim Sotis; Douglas Steele; Craig Thompson; Alison Van Keuren; Robert Yunick.

**Abbreviations:** ACCBC - Albany County CBC, 22 Dec; BR - Burgoyne Rd., SARA; CBL - Cossackie Boat Launch, GREE; CCCBC - Catskill-Cossackie CBC, 29 Dec; ChCBC - Chatham CBC, 21 Dec; CL - Collins Lake, SCHE; FPCBC - Fort Plain CBC, 28 Dec; FR - Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar, ALBA; FtE - Fort Edward area, WASH; FtM - Fort Miller, WASH; GCBC - Galway CBC, 28 Dec; GI - Green Island, ALBA; HFCBC - Hudson Falls CBC, 21 Dec; HR - Hudson River; JGCBC - Johnstown-Gloversville CBC, 29 Dec; JL - Jenny Lake, SARA; L7 - Vischer Ferry Power Station/Lock 7, SCHE; MR - Mohawk River; NB - New Baltimore, GREE; NRRS - Niskayuna Railroad Station, SCHE; NYSWC - New York State Waterfowl Count, 12, 19 Jan; ScCBC - Schenectady CBC, 21 Dec; SI - Simmons Island, Cohoes, SARA; SL - Saratoga Lake, SARA; SNHP - Saratoga National Historical Park, SARA; SPd - Stanton Pond, ALBA; SRCBC - Southern Rensselaer CBC, 28 Dec; SS - Stockport Station, COLU; SSCBC - Saratoga Spa CBC, 21 Dec; StFl - Stillwater Flats (includes Saratoga Sod Farm), SARA; TCBC - Troy CBC, 4 Jan; TR - Tomhannock Reservoir, RENS; VF - Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, SARA; WR - Watervliet Reservoir, ALBA.

**LOONS-WATERFOWL:** **Com. Loon:** max five SL 7 Dec; four ACCBC; one SSCBC; one TCBC; two s L George 28 Dec; one n L George 8 Jan. **Horned Grebe:** two SL 7 Dec, one still present 29 Dec, only reports. **Red-necked Grebe:** max five SL 7 Dec; one L7 16 Feb. **Double-crested Cormorant:** one T Hague 21 Jan (LM). **Great Blue Heron:** 48 on ten CBCs; high count 14 TCBC; five Jan, three Feb reports. **Mute Swan:** 30 HR on two CBCs; 14 CBL 6 Feb; 25 Dutchman's Landing Catskill thru (L. Federman). **Greater White-fronted Goose:** one WR 28 Feb (M. Woythal to BEN). **Snow Goose:** eight on four CBCs; two NYSWC; 70 HR Stillwater 23 Feb. **Canada Goose:** high counts 7311 TCBC, 4934 NYSWC. **Wood Duck:** seven on four CBCs. **Green-winged Teal:** two FtPCBC; one NYSWC; one overwintered CL/MR Binnekill

(RP). **Am. Black Duck**: 1285 on nine CBCs; 883 NYSWC. **Mallard**: 4981 on 11 CBCs; 1250 NYSWC; low numbers. **N. Pintail**: one-four present at several locations Dec-Jan; eight Hoosic/Hudson RENS 12 Feb; one Hillsdale 22 Feb. **Gadwall**: two ACCBC; one TCBC. **Am. Wigeon**: one StFI 8 Dec; four ACCBC. **Canvasback**: 65 CBL 12 Dec, up to 200 in late Feb; 144 NYSWC; 54 Catskill 6 Jan; reported in several other locations in small numbers throughout period. **Redhead**: four Lock 4 Stillwater 25 Jan (WE, NM); one CBL 6-26 Feb. **Ring-necked Duck**: 110 ACCBC; two SL 26 Dec; one MR Colonie 22 Feb. **Greater Scaup**: max 36 SL 7, 11 Dec; three ACCBC; seven CCCBC; seven NYSWC; one Livingston 12 Jan; one GI 25 Jan. **Lesser Scaup**: six SL 7 Dec; one CBL 23, 26 Feb. **Oldsquaw**: one ChCBC; one Germantown COLU 12 Jan; two NYSWC; one HR n of Hudson Falls 1 Feb. **Surf Scoter**: one TR 3 Dec. **White-winged Scoter**: seven SL 9 Dec. **Com. Goldeneye**: max 450 SL 7 Dec; 527 on five CBCs; 193 NYSWC; 75 FtM 27 Jan; 49 Stillwater 25 Jan; 46 Mechanicville 16 Feb. **Barrow's Goldeneye**: one SL at least through 19 Dec (WL). **Bufflehead**: max 38 SL 7 Dec; three Jan reports; arr two SS 22 Feb (PC). **Hooded Merganser**: max 150 SL 11 Dec; 78 ACCBC; seven NYSWC; three SS 22 Feb. **Com. Merganser**: high counts 500 Round L 19 Dec, c.500 SL 26 Dec; 302 ACCBC; 324 NYSWC; present in moderate numbers thru. **Red-breasted Merganser**: one Mechanicville 14 Dec; one ACCBC; two CCCBC; one HR Albany 31 Jan. **Ruddy Duck**: one SL 7 Dec; eleven ACCBC.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS**: **Turkey Vulture**: arr Kiskatom 17 Feb (L. Federman); arr one Albany 20 Feb; early. **Bald Eagle**: 17 on six CBCs; at least 17 ad, 19 imm Conklingville Dam, HR, MR, L George, Hoosic R all season; max four ad, seven imm Conklingville Dam 17 Jan; five feeding on deer carcass Putnam WASH 16 Jan; 25 bt Rhinecliff-Albany 28 Feb (both reports *fide* M. Peterson). **N. Harrier**: 23 on five CBCs; five-nine present FtE through period; two Coxsackie 6 Feb; ten reports of singles. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: 41 on nine CBCs; 16 reports of singles. **Cooper's Hawk**: 19 on seven CBCs; 19 reports of singles. **N. Goshawk**: one ACCBC; one CCCBC; one TCBC; one FtE 23 Jan (WL). **Red-shouldered Hawk**: one FtE 5 Dec; one HFCBC; one SSCBC; one Rt. 50 SARA 23 Jan; one Ballston Spa 25-30 Jan. **Red-tailed Hawk**: max 107 TCBC; 88 FPCBC. **Rough-legged Hawk**: 15 on three CBCs; max 13 FtPCBC; eight FtE throughout period; two T Canajoharie 31 Jan; two Hoosic/Hudson RENS 12 Feb; four Coxsackie 14 Feb; 12 reports of singles. **Am. Kestrel**: ten on six CBCs; eight reports of singles. **Merlin**: one T Hague 7 Dec (ER); one CL 27 Dec (RP); one ad Schodack Ctr 3 Feb (PC). **Peregrine Falcon**: two downtown Albany 21 Dec-6 Feb; one FtM 15 Dec; one ACCBC; one HFCBC; three SRCBC; one Rt32/23A GREE 30 Dec. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: three on three CBCs; three other reports. **Ruffed Grouse**: five JL 7 Dec, two 18 Jan; four reports of singles. **Wild Turkey**: high counts 214 ChCBC, 129 FPCBC.

**Am. Coot:** 13 SL 7, 9 Dec; one Copake 16 Dec; one HFCBC; 14 SSCBC; one CBL 26 Feb. **Killdeer:** arr VF 22 Feb; one Delmar 25 Feb; one Greenport 27 Feb; one BR 27 Feb. **Am. Woodcock:** one displaying Albany 27 Feb. **Ring-billed Gull:** max 869 CCCBC; 200+ Catskill 6 Jan. **Herring Gull:** max 2648 CCCBC, 2264 TCBC; 1000+ near Colonie Landfill 25 Jan. **Thayer's Gull:** one SI 2 Jan (WL); one TCBC. **Iceland Gull:** one-eleven CBL thru; five SI 2 Jan. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** two Colonie/Crescent area 9 Dec-15 Feb; one CBL 6-15 Feb. **Glaucous Gull:** one-two Colonie/SI area 9 Dec-2 Jan; one-two CBL 26 Dec-26 Feb. **Great Black-backed Gull:** max 416 CCCBC; 306 TCBC; 400-500 MR Crescent 1-9 Feb.

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS:** **Rock Dove:** high counts 1591 FPCBC; 1402 TCBC. **Mourning Dove:** high counts 979 TCBC, 879 FPCBC. **E. Screech-Owl:** 28 on eight CBCs; one FR 1 Jan; three Feb reports of singles. **Great Horned Owl:** 37 on nine CBCs; eight other reports. **Snowy Owl:** one Van Eps Rd MONT 23 Dec (W. Greene to BEN); one FtE 19-27 Jan, 21 Feb (BP). **Barred Owl:** six on five CBCs; one Grapeville GREE 26 Jan (PC); one T Hague 19 Feb (LM); one dead on road Rt. 29 T Saratoga 22 Feb; only reports. **Short-eared Owl:** eight FtE 23 Dec-21 Jan, four still present 26 Feb (BP); three Coxsackie 26 Jan, 6 Feb; one SNHP 31 Jan; six T Sharon thru (EA). **N. Saw-Whet Owl:** one FPCBC; one JGCBC; two T Sharon 8 Feb (AM); one Poestenskill 28 Feb (J. Marx to BEN). **Belted Kingfisher:** 26 on seven CBCs; three Jan, two Feb reports. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** 62 on eight CBCs, high count 18 ChCBC; 16 reports of singles. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** one ACCBC; one Austerlitz 27 Dec (ADBC); one Burnt Hills 8 Jan (D. Beeler to BEN). **Downy Woodpecker:** 570 on ten CBCs; max 197 TCBC. **Hairy Woodpecker:** 132 on ten CBCs; max 28 TCBC. **N. Flicker:** 135 on ten CBCs; max 32 CCCBC; seven Jan, six Feb reports. **Pileated Woodpecker:** 46 on nine CBCs; 18 reports of singles.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS:** **E. Phoebe:** one ACCBC; one SRCBC; one FR 25 Dec-1 Jan; arr GREE 19 Feb (ADBC). **Horned Lark:** 167 on six CBCs; seen in good numbers Jan-Feb; max 300+ FtE 29 Jan; 500 Petersburg RENS 8 Feb. **Blue Jay:** 2520 on 11 CBCs; numbers seem low. **Am. Crow:** max 3184 TCBC, 2526 SRCBC; 3000 Schenectady GE plant 27 Dec, 2000+ Delmar 10 Jan, 3000+ Troy 20 Feb coming to roosts. **Fish Crow:** nine TCBC; three Jan, six Feb reports. **Com. Raven:** nine on four CBCs; 15 other reports. **Black-capped Chickadee:** max 653 JGCBC, 625 ScCBC, 519 SRCBC, 526 TCBC; few at feeders. **Tufted Titmouse:** max 140 ScCBC, 91 CCCBC. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** 109 on 11 CBCs; max 41 JGCBC. **White-breasted Nuthatch:** max 82 ChCBC. **Brown Creeper:** 67 on ten CBCs; max 12 TCBC. **Carolina Wren:** one ACCBC; two CCCBC; one NB 22 Jan, 15 Feb; one Delmar 18, 30

Jan; only reports. **HOUSE WREN**: one Palmer's Ravine MONT 23, 25, 31 Dec (TP!); first Dec Regional report. **Winter Wren**: max three CCCBC; one NRRS 15 Dec; one FR 4-5 Jan, 9, 15 Feb; one BR 22 Dec-3 Jan. **Marsh Wren**: one CCCBC; one ChCBC. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: 185 on ten CBCS; max 30 ACCBC; reported in small numbers thru. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: one CCCBC; three New Salem ALBA 24 Dec; only reports. **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER**: one ChCBC; first Dec Regional report. **E. Bluebird**: max 68 CCCBC, 45 ChCBC, 41 ACCBC; present in moderate numbers through period. **Hermit Thrush**: one ChCBC, only report. **Am. Robin**: max 5213 ChCBC, 2161 ACCBC; wintered widely. **Gray Catbird**: one ACCBC; one CCCBC; one FR 5 Feb. **N. Mockingbird**: 45 on seven CBCs; three Jan, two Feb reports. **Cedar Waxwing**: high counts 159 ACBC, 138 CCCBC, 129 FPCBC. **N. Shrike**: one ChCBC; one FPCBC; one GCBC; one ScCBC; seven reports of singles. **European Starling**: high counts 9940 TCBC, 5165 SRCBC.

**VIREOS-WARBLES**: **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: seven CCCBC; one FPCBC; one TCBC. **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER**: one Mechanicville 7-16 Dec (HMBC field trip, mob, NYSARC). **Com. Yellowthroat**: one ScCBC; one TCBC.

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS**: **N. Cardinal**: high counts 116 ScCBC; 94 TCBC; 13-14 at feeder Guilderland 28 Jan, 15 Feb; began singing Broadalbin 26 Feb. **Am. Tree Sparrow**: 246 FPCBC; 171 TCBC; numbers down. **Chipping Sparrow**: one FR 22-30 Dec (KA, RP); one JGCBC, first Dec reports since 1977. **Field Sparrow**: one SRCBC, only report. **Fox Sparrow**: one CCCBC, only report. **Song Sparrow**: 196 on ten CBCs, high count 45 TCBC. **Swamp Sparrow**: 11 on four CBCs; one Guilderland Ctr ALBA 19 Jan (L. Alden to BEN). **White-throated Sparrow**: max 162 CCCBC, 134 ACCBC. **White-crowned Sparrow**: one overwintered FR. **Dark-eyed Junco**: max 536 ACCBC; 418 ChCBC. **Lapland Longspur**: three FPCBC; 12 FtE 1 Feb. **Snow Bunting**: max 1000 Petersburg 8 Feb. **Red-winged Blackbird**: 159 on five CBCs; arr 22 Feb throughout Region. **E. Meadowlark**: three CCCBC; seven-eight FtE 8 Dec-2 Feb (BP); six-seven T Canajoharie 31 Jan-16 Feb (WP); two Ames MONT 11 Feb; three FR 3 Jan, 6 Feb. **Rusty Blackbird**: two CCCBC; one SRCBC; one TCBC; one Staats I RENS 24 Feb (PC). **Com. Grackle**: max 1017 CCCBC; arr 60+ Castleton 15 Feb (PC). **Brown-headed Cowbird**: 121 on six CBCs; max 60 ChCBC; arr two FR 9 Feb. **Purple Finch**: 293 on ten CBCs; 50 T Dresden WASH 19 Jan (BP); 30-40 daily in Feb at feeder (KA); present in good numbers throughout season. **House Finch**: max 285 TCBC; 269 ScCBC; 221 FPCBC; newly-banded birds at Tom Palmer's showing signs of conjunctivitis (RY). **Red Crossbill**: one Thurman WARR 15 Feb (DR); regularly occurring JL (RY). **White-winged Crossbill**: one River Rd WARR 15

Feb (DR), only report. **Com. Redpoll**: no reports. **Pine Siskin**: 53 on four CBCs; max 28 Fox Hill Rd. SARA 9 Feb; present in small numbers thru . **Am. Goldfinch**: max 704 FPCBC; 635 JGCBC. **Evening Grosbeak**: two FPCBC; two JGCBC; five New Scotland 4 Jan; conspicuous by their almost total absence. **House Sparrow**: max 356 FPCBC; 766 SRCBC.

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## REGION 9 - HUDSON-DELAWARE

**MICHAEL BOCHNIK**

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The Region's weather was marked by unusual warmth and lack of snow. The average temperature at Westchester County Airport for December was 37.8 degrees, four degrees above average. January's temperature was near normal coming in at 28.0 degrees. February warmed up to 37.3 degrees, 5.5 degrees above average. Precipitation was near normal each month with a combined 9.33 inches. Only 3.7 inches of snow were recorded at the Westchester County Airport. Higher amounts were found in areas farther north and south.

During 17-19 January, the only major deep freeze occurred. All fresh water and many of the salt water bays were frozen as the result of this cold snap. Lakes and reservoirs in the southern part of the Region started to open up as early as the second week of February.

The most notable bird was a Sandhill Crane found in Goshen, Orange County in and around 6 1/2 Station Marsh. It was discovered 30 November and was present until 3 January.

A Snowy Owl appeared at a shopping center in Poughkeepsie and stayed for the entire period. Another Snowy Owl made a brief afternoon appearance at Read Sanctuary in Rye on 25 January.

White-winged gulls made an exceptional appearance in Ellenville, Ulster County where up to six immature Icelanders and at least one Glaucous Gull spent most of December and January around a pond in back of the Fallsview Hotel.

An unusually high number of Winter Wrens, 48, was found on the Westchester side of the Bronx-Westchester CBC 29 December. It appears to be a localized event.



An **Indigo Bunting** was present at a Cold Spring feeder throughout the winter. It was not identified until Lew King, a neighbor and birder, photographed it in late March.

A variety of warblers were found during the warm December, including: Orange-crowned, Nashville, Cape May, Black-throated Blue, Black-and-white, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat and Yellow-rumped. A **Wilson's Warbler** surprised a birder in downtown Hastings on 2 January.

**Contributors:** Michael Bochnik, Frank Bonanno, Eugene Brown, Tom Burke, Linda Lawson Fagan, Fred Hubbard, John Burroughs Natural History Society, Ulster County(JBNHS), Lew King, Jeff Main, Phil Meisner, Doris Metraux, Drew Panko, Gerhard Patsch, Jim Previdi, Rockland Audubon Society (RAS), Joe Scordats, Al Schaut, Selden Spencer, Edward Treacy, Alison Van Keuren, Mans Weber, Carol Weiss

**Abbreviations:** BCF - Blue Chip Farm, ULST; BWCBC - Bronx-Westchester Christmas Bird Count, only WEST birds reported; CPP - Croton Point Park; EGR - Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary; FVH - Fallsview Hotel, Ellenville, ULST; GA - Galeville Airport; GSP - Goshen sewage pond; JBNHS - John Burroughs Natural History Society, ULST; LHVBL - Lower Hudson Valley Bird Line; MARCBC - Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir Christmas Bird Count; MC - Marshlands Conservancy; PCBC - Peekskill Christmas Bird Count; PCCBC - Putnam County Christmas Bird Count; Pine I - Pine Island, sod farms and vicinity; PP - Piermont Pier; RASCBC - Rockland Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count; RL - Rockland Lake; RNC - Rye Nature Center; RSPP - Rockefeller State Park Preserve; SCCBC - Sullivan Co. Christmas Bird Count; SSM - 6-1/2 Station Marsh; WCF - Woodbourne Correctional Facility, SULL; WPS - Westhampton (Mid-Hudson) Psychiatric Center, Goshen.

**LOONS-DUCKS:** **Red-throated Loon:** one Plum Cove, ORAN 10 Dec. **Red-necked Grebe:** one off Glen Island 29 Dec; one EGR 18 Dec, 8 and 21 Feb. **Double-crested Cormorant:** one Garrison 4 Jan. **Great Blue Heron:** 21 EGR 29 Dec. **Great Egret:** one Rye 29 Dec (BWCBC). **Mute Swan:** 50+ Saugerties 6 Feb. **Greater White-fronted Goose:** one Pine I 24 Dec; seven Westtown 11 Feb. **Snow Goose:** one CPP 26 Dec; three blue morph Pine I 25 Jan. **N. Pintail:** four SSM 21 Dec; RL 20 Feb; NBSP 25 Feb. **N. Shoveler:** 12 SSM 14 Dec. **Eurasian Wigeon:** one Rye 11 Dec - 8 Feb. **Redhead:** three EGR 18 Dec; three Ridgebury 6 Feb. **Oldsquaw:** six SSM 14 Dec. **White-winged Scoter:** three EGR 29 Dec.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** **Black Vulture:** four Fort Montgomery 21 Dec; three Bear Mountain 6 Jan; four Pomona 2 Feb (FB). **Bald Eagle:** many reports of 20 to 30 along Hudson River from Croton Point to Bear Mountain Bridge; max 39

(13 adults, 26 imm.) 15 Feb (FB). **N. Goshawk**: one Mongaup Falls 1 Feb. **Red-tailed Hawk**: pair with nest in a white pine on Route 119, Tarrytown 31 Jan (ET). **Rough-legged Hawk**: two Pine I 10, 13 Dec; one Garrison 4 Jan; one Carmel 4 Jan; one Pine I 11 Jan; one CPP 11 Jan; three BCF 9 Feb. **Golden Eagle**: two Stissing Mt 15 Dec; three Stissing Mt 30 Jan. **Merlin**: one Mahopac 4 Jan (PCCBC). **Peregrine Falcon**: one Pine I 15 Dec; one Bear Mt 6 Jan. **Wild Turkey**: 29 MARCBC 21 Dec; 11 MC 4 Dec. **Clapper Rail**: two Rye 29 Dec. **Virginia Rail**: two MC 29 Dec; one MC 27 Jan. **Sandhill Crane**: one SSM 1 Dec -3 Jan (mob) **Killdeer**: two PP 15 Feb. **Com. Snipe**: one PP 25 Jan (RAS). **Am. Woodcock**: one MC 21 Feb; six MC 23 Feb; New Paltz 22 Feb. **Iceland Gull**: up to six imm FVH Dec -Feb (ET, MB), max six on 8 Feb (MB); three Kingstone Point Beach 13 Dec; one WCF 29 Dec; two 6SS 5 Jan.(ET); three GSP 6 Feb.(ET, JS). **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: one EGR 25-26 Dec, 13 Jan, 4 Feb, 23 Feb; one WCF 29 Dec; one GSP 6 Feb (ET, JS). **Glaucous Gull**: one FVH 8 Feb (MB); one New Hampton Psychiatric Center 3 Feb (ET); one SSM 5 Jan.(ET).

**DOVES-WOODPECKERS**: **Snowy Owl**: one Poughkeepsie 14 Dec thru; one EGR 25 Jan (JM). **Long-eared Owl**: one MC 27 Jan. **Short-eared Owl**: one Pine I 13 Dec; one E.Orangetown 15 Dec; five GA 9 Feb. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: one MARCBC 21 Dec.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLING**: **Horned Lark**: several hundred Pine I 3 Dec (ET). **Tree Swallow**: ULST 26 Feb. **Com. Raven**: one Route 6 & 202 Overlook 22 Dec; 20 Claryville 1 Jan; three Ft. Montgomery 13 Jan (AS); three Doodletown Road 19 Feb (PM). **Brown Creeper**: two RSPP 6 Jan. **Winter Wren**: 48 BWCBC 29 Dec, unusually high number. **N. Shrike**: one PCCBC, Mahopac 4 Jan.

**VIREOS-WARBLEDERS**: **Orange-crowned Warbler**: one Yonkers 29 Dec (MB). **Nashville Warbler**: one CPP 21 Dec. **Cape May Warbler**: one Ossining 21 Dec (PCBC). **Black-throated Blue warbler**: one RSPP 24 Dec. **Black-and-white Warbler**: one Nyack 4 Dec. **Common Yellowthroat**: one Rye 29 Dec (BWCBC). **WILSON'S WARBLER**: one Hastings 2 Jan (FH). **Yellow-breasted Chat**: one Greenburgh 4 Dec - 15 Jan (DP).

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS**: **INDIGO BUNTING**: one Cold Spring feeder all winter, photo in March (LK). **Dickcissel**: one Yonkers 12 Dec. **Chipping Sparrow**: one Hastings 29 Dec; one MC 11-19 Jan. **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow**: one MC 17 Dec. **White-crowned Sparrow**: one Rye 29 Dec. **Lapland Longspur**: three Pine I 3 Dec (ET); seven Pine I 13 Dec. **Snow Bunting**: two Pine I 3 Dec (ET); 30 Pine I 13 Dec; one EGR 16 Dec. **Com.**

**Grackle:** migrant flock Highland Falls 23 Feb (ET). **Baltimore Oriole:** one Nyack 3 Feb thru (EB). **Pine Grosbeak:** 11 PCCBC, Mahopac 4 Jan. **Purple Finch:** eight Harriman 8 Jan (JP). **White-winged Crossbill:** one RNC 28 Dec. **Pine Siskin:** four N. Clarkstown 15 Dec (RASCBC).

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## REGION 10 - MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF

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In contrast to recent years this winter season was warm and mostly free of snow. February was exceptionally warm, almost six and a half degrees over normal and slightly drier. The end of the month saw three new daily highs. Generally the birding was lackluster if not down right dull. There were no northern finches and no Northern Shrike irruption. The few high spots were a scattering of lingering passerines and a few wintering uncommon birds. To quote Ken Feustel and Bob Kurtz, "Lackluster." We concur.

On 5 January a heavy pea soup fog covered Nassau County all day, completely blanketing the skies, and open water of lakes, wetlands and ocean. This made this current South Nassau Christmas Bird Count unique in the annals of our Region's Christmas counts. It surpassed in difficulty, previous blizzards, driving rains, freezing weather, frozen ponds and ice covered wetlands. Amazingly, a respectable 123 birds were seen in the fog, down from the 142 seen last year.

Increased numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese were found this season. A total of seven was seen in Mecox Bay 11 January by Doug Futuyma. Others, presumably the same ones, were seen on the East End from late December to late February.

While American Oystercatchers winter, this season a dozen birds had the company of a lone **Willet**. This group frequented the marsh island opposite the Jones Beach Fishing piers along with several dozen Harbor Seals.

Two Snowy Owls wintered to the West of the West End #2 parking lot at Jones Beach, clearly visible from the lot almost all winter. Later in the season the number increased to four, all of which could also be seen by scope from the

lot as small specks in the distance. A total of a dozen others was scattered through the Region.

One dark and one gray Gyrfalcon were found at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge late January to late February along with several Peregrine Falcons. Details were lacking.

Few Bonaparte's Gulls were found this winter. Significant numbers did not appear until late in the season and may have represented migrants rather than wintering birds. There were no reports of the usual rarities associated with this species.

Birders have been actively pursuing Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow this fall and during the CBCs. No members of this species were found in our Region this year during the counts.

John Askildsen saw a **SANDHILL CRANE** in Bridgehampton on 8 December, the best rarity of the season. But, the best bird of the season would seem to be a **WILSON'S WARBLER** found on the Southern Nassau County CBC on the unprecedented date of 5 January.

**Contributors:** Bob Adamo, Jim Ash, John P. Askildsen, Steven Biasetti, Thomas W. Burke, James Clinton, Sr., Henry F. Flamm, John J. Fritz, Ken Feustel, Tom Fiore, Doug Futuyma, Paul H. Gillen, Robert J. Kurtz, Anthony J. Lauro, Beverly Prentice, Joan Quinlan, Seymour Schiff, Lore J. Schore, Diana Teta, Chris Valle, Steve Walter, Angus Wilson (AnW), Alvin Wollin (AW).

**Abbreviations:** APP - Alley Pond Park; CB - Cedar Beach; CP - Central Park; CBC - Christmas Bird Count, CLP - Clove Lake Park, SI; CRSP - Connetquot River State Park; JBWR - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, JBCH - Jones Beach; JBWE - Jones Beach West End; LI - Long Island; MSP - Massapequa Preserve; MEB - Mecox Bay; MP - Montauk Point; MOR - Moriches; NYRBA - New York Rare Bird Alert; PL - Pt. Lookout; PP - Prospect Park; SHIN - Shinnecock Inlet; SI - Staten Island; SN - Southern Nassau.

**LOONS-DUCKS:** **Red-necked Grebe:** widely scattered reports thru. **Eared Grebe:** PL mid Feb. **Great Egret:** four HLSP into Jan. **Tricolored Heron:** JBWR 13 Jan. **Cattle Egret:** Montauk Dude Ranch 1-31 Dec. **Tundra Swan:** five Hook Pond 3 Dec; others in surrounding areas to mid Feb. **Greater White-fronted Goose:** SN CBC 5 Jan; seven Mecox Bay 11 Jan (DF); two Short's Pond 12 Jan; five Watermill 26 Jan; four Bridgehampton 26 Jan, probably the same as prior birds; Short's Pond 9 Feb; two Shinnecock 16 Feb; two Southampton 15 Feb. **Snow Goose:** 200-600 JBWR in Winter. **Green-winged Teal, the nominate Eurasian form:** Floyd Bennett Field 4 Jan. SN CBC 5 Jan; MSP 7 Jan. **Blue-winged Teal:** two JBWE mid-Jan. **Gadwall:** 450 CPSP 26 Jan, a very large number, probably a winter high for one locality (KF).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** scattered birds throughout Region. **Redhead:** 40 Willet's Pond, Babylon 21 Feb, a large number. **Tufted Duck:** male Riverhead 13 Jan (JC), two female Southampton ponds 25-30 Jan (JA *et al.*). **Common Eider:** 10,000+ wintered MP. **King Eider:** three Orient Pt 4 Jan; one to two wintered at MP; but note difficulty of finding the few in the immense Common Eider flocks. **Harlequin Duck:** 4-7 wintered PL, 1-2 in MP area. **Barrow's Goldeneye:** female Northwest Harbor 21 Feb (JA).

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** **Turkey Vulture:** MEB 15 Dec; Montauk 26 Dec, Huntington 20 Feb. **Osprey:** a bird wintered at Twin Lakes Preserve, Wantagh. **Bald Eagle:** Whitestone 11 Jan; JBWR 26 Jan; Mecox 11 Feb; MP 16 Feb. **BROAD-WINGED HAWK:** CP 8-15 Dec (NYRBA, mob). **Rough-legged Hawk:** scattered reports. **Gyr Falcon:** dark female JBWR 25 Jan to 24 Feb; gray male JBWR 6-10 Feb. **Virginia Rail:** Shu Swamp 28 Dec. **Com. Moorhen:** NCCBC 5 Jan; Prospect Park 9-28 Feb. **SANDHILL CRANE:** Bridgehampton 8 Dec (JPA). **Am. Golden-Plover:** MP and MEB 7 Dec, late dates. **American Oystercatcher:** 11 wintered opposite the JBCH fishing pier (field #10). **Greater Yellowlegs:** wintered MSP. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** two MSP 12 Jan. **WILLET:** one wintered with a flock of 12 Amer. Oystercatchers. **Marbled Godwit:** JBWR 8 Dec. **SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER:** Great South Bay in East Patchogue 18 Jan (DT). **Long-billed Dowitcher:** four MSP late Dec, two through. **Common Snipe:** up to nine MSP during winter. **Black-headed Gull:** PP 15 Dec to 25 Feb. **Bonaparte's Gull:** few birds at both ends of the Jones strip, their usual haunt, and few at Shinnecock.; max noted was 650 at PL 29 Dec. **Iceland Gull:** widely scattered reports, more this year; max four on the SI dump 14 Feb. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** a dozen widely scattered birds plus seven on the SI dump 21 Dec, with four on 14 Feb; a species increasing in our area in fall and wintering. **Glaucous Gull:** SI dump 21 Dec, Breezy Pt. 27 Feb. **Black-legged Kittiwake:** low numbers off MP. **Razorbill:** MP - 15 on 3 Dec, 25 on 10 Dec, 21 on 28 Dec, 12 on 1 Jan, 2 on 1 Feb. **BLACK GUILLEMOT:** MP 22 Feb (AnW).

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS:** **Snowy Owl:** a dozen birds wintered from JBWR to MEB inc. four at JBWE. **Short-eared Owl:** two MP CBC 21 Dec; JBWR 27 Dec; SN CBC 5 Jan; Southampton 1 Jan; Breezy PT. 4 Jan; CB 25 Jan; four CB 9 Feb (KF). **N. Saw-whet Owl:** two reports from NASS CBC's. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** MP 21 Dec; Orient Pt. CBC 4 Jan.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLING:** **Western Kingbird:** Bayard Cutting Arboretum 3 Dec; Sagaponack CBC 22 Dec. **Carolina Wren:** numbers much reduced after the previous two years' harsh winters. **N. Shrike:** Gardiner's Is 21 Dec; Muttontown Preserve 28 Dec; Lake Success 12 Jan.



**VIREOS-WARBLERS:** **Orange-crowned Warbler:** Brooklyn CBC 21 Dec; six SN CBC 5 Jan. **Nashville Warbler:** CP 22-29 Dec. **Pine Warbler:** Heckscher State Park 3,26 Jan (JF). **Com. Yellowthroat:** Speonk 29 Dec (SB); SI 19 Jan (HF). **WILSON'S WARBLER:** SN CBC 5 Jan (Matt Bayer, Hugh Boyle, Larry Plotnick, AW). **Yellow-breasted Chat:** MSP 7-15 Jan; a few others.

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS:** **Dickcissel:** APP 8-22 Dec; Haven's Beach early Jan. **Lark Sparrow:** Haven's Beach to 1 Feb. **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** Captree CBC; two SN CBC 5 Jan. **White-crowned Sparrow:** 12 found at MEB 1 Jan; a few others. **Lapland Longspur:** 7-10 JBWE mid-Dec to early Feb; two MP CBC 21 Dec; Captree CBC 22 Dec; two MEB 9 Feb. **Rusty Blackbird:** up to 30 wintered in Shu Swamp, Oyster Bay. **Boat-tailed Grackle:** 262 Queens CBC 21 Dec; SHIN 12 Jan, becoming regular at this location; JBCH fishing pier late Feb.

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Please see: *The Kingbird* 1997 Mar; 47(1): 84.

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